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SOCCER

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BLANCO'S OLYMPIC SPYING MISSION

STALLIONS SHINE: Marconi skipper Brad Maloney tangles with South's defender Nick Orlic. Marconi recorded an impressive 2-1 victory away from home. Full story page 12.

By John Economos

"I quickly got in touch with reality on just how much Brazil is urgently seeking a Gold Medal at our Olympics come September. They are obsessed for Gold.

"Brazil has won World Cups with their Under 17s through to the seniors, but has never gained Gold at an Olympics. Their preparation and performances have been absolutely outstanding.

"I watched Brazil very closely during the final Olympic qualifiers tournament staged in Brazil and they were just nothing short of marvellous."

These were the words of warning that Australia's Olympic coach Raul Blanco stated to ABSW when we contacted him yesterday in England.

For the past five weeks Blanco has had a hectic itinerary as he flew to South America to closely monitor the South American Olympic qualifiers, ultimately won by Brazil and Chile.

The Australian Olympic squad has two friendly internationals lined up to be played against Slovakia on March 22nd and against Holland six days later.

Once the South American qualifiers were determined, Blanco immediately flew to England and Scotland to make contact with all his overseas based Olympic squad players.

Whilst in the U.K. the Olympics coach has utilised the opportunity to also make contact with some of Australia's senior players, three of which can be eligible to compete in the next Olympics.

Raul Blanco: Australia's Olympic Games coach.

"I've been talking to some of the over-aged players I consider that could come into the Olympic squad. I want to complete my mission whilst I'm here in the U.K.," Blanco stated.

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TELEPHONE
(editorial and general enquiries)
Tel: (02) 9562 0559
or
Tel: (02) 9562 0565

(advertising)
Tel: (02) 9744 6984
or
Tel: (02) 9562 0559

E-MAIL
(editorial, advertising and general enquiries)
soccerweekly@hotmail.com

FACSIMILE
(editorial, advertising and general enquiries)
(02) 9550 9332 or (02) 9564 1224

MAILING ADDRESS
P.O. 155, Marrickville NSW 1475

SUBSCRIPTIONS
Sylvia Marinos
Phone: (02) 9562 0575
Australia: $130 Overseas: $180

EDITOR
Vince Battiato

CHIEF WRITER
John Economos

STAFF WRITER
Daniel Giorelando

LAYOUT/SETTING
Mary Quartly, Alamita Vea

CORRESPONDENTS
Bert van Bedaf (Melbourne editor),
Allan Crisp (Adelaide)
Glenn Davis (Brisbane),
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DISTRIBUTION

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FLP Pty Ltd. 5-13 Garners Ave,
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BLANCO'S OLYMPIC SPYING MISSION

Continued from Page 1

By John Economos

Blanco who is expected to arrive back in Australia tomorrow (Wednesday), went on to add: "Brazil was just magnificent and to think they can still call on three more super-stars in Denilson, Rivaldo, Ronaldo and Roberto Carlos .

"In fact Denilson who is under 23, and could have played in the qualifiers, was not used in the final tournament at all.

"Although Denilson had been released by his Club in Spain to travel to Brazil, he arrived late and was sent straight back to Spain," Blanco explained.

Brazil in the tournament demolished Colombia 9-0, Argentina 4-2, drew with Uruguay 2-2 and beat Chile 3-1.

"As I said before, I got in touch with the reality of just how much Brazil is wanting that Olympic Gold Medal.

"Argentina was the disappointing team I thought in the whole tournament.

"But here in England I've had talks to most of the players I have under Olympic consideration, plus I watched many of their games on television," ended Blanco.

Meanwhile one of Blanco's assistant Olympic coaches, the former Australian World Cup goalkeeper, Jimmy Fraser, has been left behind in Australia to keep an eagle eye on some of the home-based Olympic players.

Last Sunday night Fraser was at Belmore Sports Ground where he watched Brett Emerton's star performance for Sydney Olympic against the Northern Spirit.

"I was impressed by Sydney Olympic's build ups and were the best I've seen from them for quite a while.

"Emerton and Cardozo were both most impressive," Fraser observed to ABSW.

JIMMY FRASER: Australia's Olympic coach of the goalkeepers

COURT REJECTS PFA ACTIONS

By John Economos

THE FEDERAL COURT of Australia last Friday, refused to issue orders against the Northern Spirit following the lodgement of proceedings by the Professional Footballers Association (P.F.A.) regarding the 'dismissal' of Spirit players, midfielder Robbie Enes and striker Tony Perinich.

Court Judge Tony North brought down in Melbourne that the P.F.A.'s decision to raise the case with the Court as being inappropriate, strongly urging the P.F.A. to stick to the grievance procedure under the 'Collective Bargaining Agreement' (CBA).

The Judge added that the P.F.A.'s actions were inappropriate to approach his Court, not having first exhausted the grievance procedure under the 'Collective Bargaining Agreement'.

Late Friday afternoon Spirit officials offered to settle the matter out of court, a solution the P.F.A.'s C.E.O. Brendan Schwab flatly refused.

. A meeting between Spirit officials and the P.F.A., plus their respective legal teams, was held last Sunday to resolve the players' dispute out of court.

Some very positive inroads were achieved, especially in the case of Perinich.

Robert Enes: Unavailable for comments.

The mobile striker not only is now expected to attend the Spirit's training session this morning (Tuesday), but also has had an offer to have his contract extended by another season.

Meanwhile regarding the situation for Enes, the sweeper cum midfielder could not be contacted all last Sunday as he was in hospital at his wife's bedside where she is expecting the couple's first child.

SHEARER RETIRES

England captain Alan Shearer ruled himself out of the 2002 World Cup last week by announcing his international retirement after this summer's European championship finals.

"After a huge amount of thought I have decided to retire from international football," he said in a statement after Newcastle United beat Sheffield Wednesday 2-0 in the Premier League.

"I would like to play, if selected, in Euro 2000 and then bow out so that the manager has time to plan effectively for the 2002 World Cup," the 29-year-old striker said.

Shearer said he had spoken to both Newcastle United manager Bobby Robson and England manager Kevin Keegan and they understood his reasoning.

Keegan said: "Of course I was very sad and I tried to change his mind. But everyone should respect his decision – certainly I do – and I'm happy for him because it is what he wants. His England record speaks for itself but the best may come at Euro 2000."

Robson said: "This is a decision made entirely by Alan and made in the best interests of himself.

"He has served England magnificently and wishes to move on from international football while at the top of his form and Newcastle will benefit from that."

Shearer said he was not walking away from the challenge and admitted he would remain available if England needed him in an emergency.

"I am hugely patriotic and my time as England captain has made me incredibly proud," he said.

The announcement surprised many fans, with some agitated supporters expressing disbelief in radio phone-ins. Others suggested he should stand down immediately.

FEDERATION CUP

By Graham Cooke

Premier League Belconnen United looked far from impressive in their opening match of the season - a 2-0 ACT Federation Cup win over the Australian National University at Deakin Oval on Sunday.

It was a game riddled with mistakes on both sides, and while the Bels were never in any danger of losing, they will have to do far better if they are to reverse the slump which saw them slip out of the Premiership finals last year.

United took the lead after five minutes, Craig Unwin dodging the tackles of two defenders before shooting under goalkeeper Darren Newington.

The first half was played at a furious pace, but with the error count so high neither side saw much reward for their efforts until Unwin grabbed his second in the 61st minute. Even then there was an element of luck, his shot deflecting off a defender past Newington.

Newly-promoted Tuggeranong United upset Capital City Suns 3-2, Alex Tine scoring the winner in stoppage time after the game seemed to be heading for a draw. Suns striker Pat Phommaseisy injured his ankle and could be out for several weeks.

There was another late goal in the game between Weston Creek and Canberra Olympic, with Olympic's Daniel Radd equalising an earlier strike from Steve Brakyns.

In other matches, White Eagles, from the State League, held Burns Club to a 2-2 draw and Canberra Deakin beat University of Canberra 2-1.

This year's competition is being played in three groups of four with the winners and best runner-up going forward to the semi-finals.

WOMEN SUPER LEAGUE

WOMENS SUPER LEAGUE:
FIRST GRADE:
Marconi 3, Macarthur Rams 0: Northern NSW/HAS 3, Wollongong Wolves 0: Manly Warringah Dolphins 0, NSW Inst Sport/Academy 2: Nepean Association 0, Sutherland Sharks 1: Central Coast Lakers 2, Gladesville Ravens 0.
GRADE 21:
Marconi 7, Macarthur Rams 0:
Northern NSW/HAS 5, Wollongong Wolves 1: Nepean Association 1, Sutherland Sharks 11: Central Coast Lakers 2, Gladesville Ravens 2.

WOMENS STATE LEAGUE:
FIRST GRADE:
UTS 4, Bathurst City 1: Hajduk Wanderers 4, Roseland Raptors 1: Gladesville Hornsby Koalas 5, Inter Lions 1.
GRADE 19:
UTS 2, Bathurst City 1: Hajduk Wanderers 3, Roseland Raptors 0: Gladesville Hornsby Koalas 7, Inter Lions 0.

VICTORIAN STATE LEAGUE

STONNINGHAM CITY S.C.

Stonnington City SC will be making their long awaited debut in the Victorian State League Division Two this season.

Coach Bill Lambropoulos and Club manager Aki Ionnas have done remarkably well to steer the club in the right direction.

"I am hoping we will have a good season," said Ionnas.

"It's going to be a difficult competition but I believe we can be competitive.

"Bill (coach) is doing a great job." ended Ionnas.

ABSW wishes Stonnington the very best for the coming season.

Aki Ionnas: Club Manager.

CARDOZO CLASS SHINES

Olympic's classic marksman masterminds Spirit win

By John Economos

Pablo Cardozo, Sydney Olympic's extraordinarily stylish striker, turned it on again for his team last Sunday night at the Belmore Sports Ground during Olympic's home clash against the Northern Spirit.

The most gifted goalscorer, not only masterminded Olympic's second goal in the first session, but quietly went ahead to nail in Olympic's third and final goal himself whilst executing some unbelievable skill, vision and balance.

Unfortunately for most Australian Soccer fans, Cardozo's goal will not be seen on television replays as a power-failure during most of the game at the Belmore ground restricted filming by C 7 to barely the last 30 odd minutes of the match.

Far from being a physically mobile player that more readily is able to attract instant attention, Cardozo's electrifyingly fast thinking, classic style employing high levels of quality skills, are such, that he is able to severely punish defenders who dare lose concentration whilst attempting to shackle him.

The quiet Olympic marksman's super silky skills, can only be matched by South Melbourne's magnificent captain and striker, Paul Trimboli.

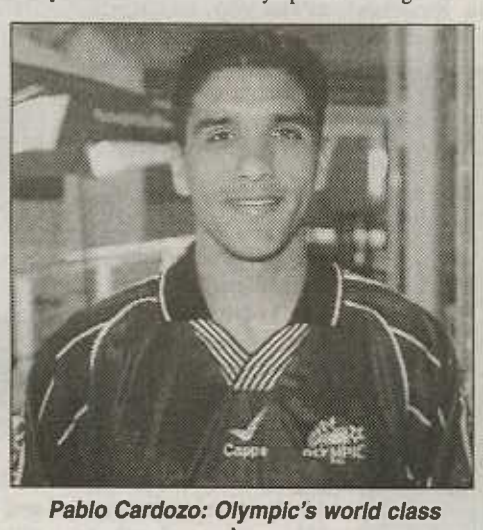
These two quality marksmen are the superbly gifted entertainers in the National League.

The 27-year-old Cardozo over the past five years has quietly grown so immense in confidence, that he has blossomed into a matured and real dangerous match winner.

Cardozo and Trimboli possess parallel remarkable qualities of being most stylish whilst lethal, as well as being constructive whilst totally unselfish.

But back to last Sunday night at Belmore Sports Ground.

In the 23rd minute of the first half, Cardozo, having drifted well back and deep into the midfield, suddenly exploded a magnificent flat through-ball that split the entire Spirit's defence to allow Brett Emerton to easily race onto and score Olympic's second goal.



Pablo Cardozo: Olympic's world class marksman.

The quality of Cardozo's well-weighted pass was such, that it brought back vivid memories most reminiscent of former England World Cup and West Ham's magnificent midfield distributor, Trevor Brooking during late 70s and early 80s.

But more cool Cardozo magic was in store for the second half.

Latching onto a strong cross fired in from the right by the bullocking midfielder Emerton 14 minutes after the break, Cardozo with world class composure, cushioned the ball as he body-feinted.

With fluid movement, Cardozo spun Spirit defender Luke Casserly before blasting from the left his bending rising shot that stretched the roof of the target.

The crowded grandstand exploded with a delirious roar.

Three magic touches from the ice-cool Cardozo brought Olympic two great goals.

In another treasured incident of last Sunday night's match that went largely undetected, came towards the latter part of the game.

Four Spirit defenders had formed an arc shadowing the clever Cardozo who was waiting just inside the touchline to receive.

With razor peripheral vision, Cardozo turned, ran a complete circle behind the defenders, before returning to the exact same spot to take a pass that finally was knocked into him.

All sheer class that European clubs pay massive money to secure such talent.

Today the dynamic, but always unassuming Cardozo, is once again at the top of the NSL's leading goalscoring chart, jointly locked in with South Melbourne's Michael Curcija with 14 goals apiece.

Perth Glory's deadly dead-ball specialist Con Boutsianis is threatening from behind and ready to strike into the lead with 13.

If a Soccer fan desires to be spellbound by some high quality entertaining skills, heavily sprinkled with doses of magic, it's advisable when watching Sydney Olympic to cast a keen eye on a player wearing Shirt No 9.

He won't be disappointed.

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The Good Oil ... The Good Oil ...

By John Economos

LEVENT OSMAN, the Auckland Kingz' midfielder may possibly have entered the record books for getting the fastest 'red card' in the League's 23 year history.

Levent Osman: Red carded a minute after kick-off.

Referee Derek Rugg in the match at Brandon Park between Wollongong Wolves and the Kingz last Sunday night, sent Osman off after he barrelled the Wolves' and former Kingz flank midfielder just a minute after kick-off.

●●●●

AN IRATE Newcastle supporter last week lodged a 'complaint' with 'Good Oil' that the Auckland Kingz should be barred from having 'Vodafone' as being unethical.

The Novocastrian fan reasoned that whilst the National League has as its major sponsor 'Ericsson', it's not correct that the opposition — 'Vodafone' — should be allowed to be major sponsors of a team within the League.

Fine and agreed.

Except for one small factor. 'Ericsson' no longer is the League's major sponsor having ceased to be at the end of last season.

Thus 'Vodafone' saw the 'flag stay down' and is well on side to sponsor the Kingz.

●●●●

THE SAGA OF MICHAEL PETKOVIC, South Melbourne's disgruntled international goalkeeper still continues.

Michael in fact is still in France and not, as rumoured all last week, back in Australia.

Re-capping, at the end of last season, with his contract completed at Souths, Petkovic signed for French first division side Strasbourg.

However, Souths since have refused to send him a clearance.

Souths concede that although Petkovic is out of contract, he is not a 'free agent'. The current League champions still believe they are entitled to demand a compensation fee as their former custodian is still under the age of 25.

Sydney Olympic over the past three weeks quickly contacted Petkovic in France and expressed a deep desire for his services.

Somewhat strangely Petkovic has not returned Olympic's calls.

The latest situation is as follows:

Petkovic is living and training in France with Strasbourg paying all his expenses whilst still waiting for his clearance to arrive.

The goalkeeper understandably seems most reluctant to return to Australia, wanting to further his career in Europe.

As well, Petkovic has his six-year-old daughter already enrolled and settled in a school over in France.

Michael Petkovic: International goalkeeper still in limbo.

What 'Good Oil' did dig up during the week, is that Petkovic's club registration is somewhat surprisingly now being held with Coburg.

●●●●

NEWCASTLE BREAKERS last Friday night hit the top of the NSL ladder (even though short lived for 48 hours) for the first time in the Club's history when they defeated the Gippsland Falcons 2-0 at the Breakers' Stadium.

Pandemonium erupted right across the Breakers' Stadium as Newcastle's brilliant blond 'tracker' Andy Roberts scored Newcastle's first goal before Brad Wieczorek doubled the scoreline 12 minutes later to cement victory for the home side.

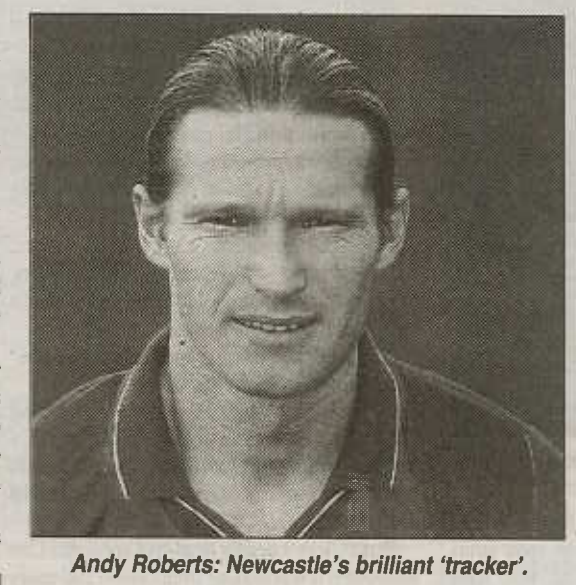
No less than 7,024 Novocastrians had crammed into the Breakers' Stadium at Birmingham Gardens to witness this historic occasion.

So deliriously excited were the Newcastle Club officials even still well after the match, that when they eventually got around to send out their Media Release the same evening, they completely forgot to include the final scoreline.

But then who cares?

A win is a win which means three League points no matter how many goals are involved.

Newcastle Breakers this Sunday travel south to Sydney to do battle with the Marconi Stallions at Marconi Stadium.



Andy Roberts: Newcastle's brilliant 'tracker'.

●●●●

MANY FULLTIME players in the NSL, today think that they have it made in the game and call themselves Pros.

Well many of us believe that this situation is totally incorrect.

One such person, a well educated and seasoned NSL player who this season for the first time in his career has become a fulltime pro, is perplexed by the warped and amateurish attitude of the many young cocky 'pro players' walking around in today's NSL.

The experienced defender stated to 'Good Oil':

"There's a heap of them. They really believe they are fulltime pro players.

"Let me tell you, all they are, are players employed fulltime but only have a part-time professional mentality.

"Their attitude stinks and during the week they just behave so casually during training sessions and believe they are actually 'earning' their money as professionals.

"Many have never had another job outside Soccer before and have become fulltime players straight away.

"So they haven't a clue what it's like on the other side of the fence—that is, having a full time job then having to back up of a night for training sessions."

Only last week former Australian World Cup captain John Kosmina expressed to 'Good Oil' similar sentiments about today's young players' attitude playing in the League.

Another former World Cup hero, defender David Ratcliffe, stated to 'Good Oil' last week: "Many of the players going around today wouldn't have lasted in my playing days.

"Their commitment, work rate and attitude is all wrong.

David Ratcliffe: Bewildered by the 'pros' of today.

"It leaves a lot to be desired and they're being paid very good money for this.

"I'm glad I'm not playing the game today amongst these guys. They just wouldn't last and it wouldn't be fun."

●●●●

MARCONI STALLIONS tomorrow night (Wednesday) will play its deferred home match against the Parramatta Power at the Marconi Stadium.

The Power originally requested Marconi to have this match deferred as it had Jacob Burns, Mile Sterjovski and Steve Laybutt out on national duty with the Australian Olympic team in Adelaide last January. (See advert page 3).

●●●●

STAND BY for yet another new team wanting to gain entry into the National Soccer League next season.

'Good Oil', as far back as last year, had already pre-empted in its column that a new consortium was lurking in the background seeking to break a new team into the NSL.

Last week a group calling themselves the 'Soccer Consortium Pty Ltd' surfaced and has set up a special luncheon this Friday with the specific aim of launching it's serious intentions to the media that it wants to enter a new team into the National League.

It's believed that the new team, (already tagged 'The New Southern Sharks'), will have amongst its shareholders, a strong underwriter in the Cronulla Sharks Rugby Leagues Club.

THE NEW SOUTHERN SHARKS

It's envisaged that the 'New Southern Sharks' will embrace the entire Sutherland Cronulla areas which have a vast and strong Junior Soccer base to service in the Southern regions of Sydney.

The foundation consortium has already targetted former Australian World Cup defender David Ratcliffe to pioneer their fledgling side into the National League.

●●●●

STEVE LAYBUTT and MILAN BLAGOJEVIC are both expected to be rushed into the Parramatta Power's first team for tomorrow night's clash with Marconi at the Marconi Stadium.

The powerful and mobile defender Laybutt, was the only Aussie-based player in the Australian team that last week whipped Hungary 0-3 in Budapest.

The strapping Laybutt gave a five star all round performance, capping it all off by scoring the 'ice-breaker' of Australia's three goals.

Technical sweeper cum playmaker Blagojevic, out of action for the past six weeks with ligament damage, is also expected to be back tomorrow night against Marconi.

●●●●

CARLTON, desperately clinging on to sixth spot following their defeat to Adelaide City last round, plays its deferred home match against current League Champions South Melbourne tomorrow (Wednesday) night at the Bob Jane Stadium.

Kick off has been set down for 7.30 pm.

Carlton's next game following Souths, is away to the Canberra Cosmos next Tuesday (March 7th) at the Bruce Stadium.

Alex Moreira: Carlton's ace goalscorer.

●●●●

PARRAMATTA POWER next Tuesday (March 7), will play hosts for a friendly match against the national team of Malaysia. The match has been set down with kick off at 6pm at the Parramatta Stadium.

Admission will be free of charge for all to this exhibition match. No catering services will be available on the night.

It's expected that head coach David Mitchell will upgrade many of the Power's Youth League players that are on the fringe of selection for the first team.

David Mitchell: The Power's head coach.

Mitchell still is very well remembered and respected back in Malaysia where he played a season before returning to Australia with leading club side Selangor at the giant structured Shah Alam Stadium.

With Mitchell whilst he was at Selangor were his best mates Josip Biskic and Mehmed Durakovic.

Mitchell became Selangor's hero scoring the only goal that gave the 'Red and Gold' the Malaysian Cup Final in 1996.

●●●●

PAUL TRIMBOLI, captain of the current League champions South Melbourne, last Sunday in the match against Marconi at the Bob Jane Stadium broke the long standing record in having played most games for the Club.

'Trimmers' since joining Souths from Sunshine George Cross played his 339th game for Souths last Sunday, breaking the previously set record by former captain and international centre-back, Steve Blair.

Trimboli stated: "I'm proud to establish the record. When I first started playing at the Club it was hard enough to get a game, let alone go for so long and sustain that level of quality.

"When you first start you don't look that far ahead and you just try to get some success," noted Trimboli who has a huge army of fans right across Australia, many NSL players included.

●●●●

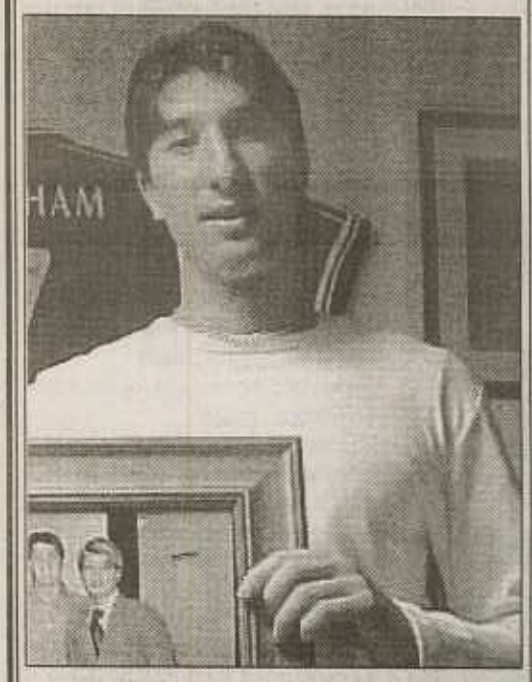
GRAHAM ARNOLD's headaches at the Northern Spirit seem to be endless this season and have gone on longer than 'Days Of Our Lives'.

Paul Trimboli: Last Sunday in action against Marconi setting Souths' new record.

OLYMPIC GAMES 2000 SQUAD MEMBER

Profile N° 152

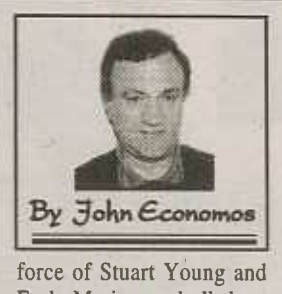
JOSEPH DIDULICA



Date Of Birth: 14th October 1977.
Birthplace: Geelong, Victoria.
Previous Clubs: North Geelong, Melbourne Knights.
Current Club: Ajax -Amsterdam-Holland.
Current Position: Goalkeeper, but was a striker whilst at North Geelong up until the Youth League level.
Nickname: 'Joey'.
Occupation: Fulltime player.
Best Aspect Of Your Game: My speed and agility inside the box.
Most Difficult Opponent: John Markovski and Andrew Marth.
Most Impressive Local Player: Mijo Trupkovic.
Favourite Overseas Player: Josip Skoko.
Favourite Overseas Club: Ajax of Amsterdam.
What Qualities Make For A Good Coach: Communicating and understanding of all his players, young and old.
Honours: 'Goalkeeper Of The Year' 1996 Victoria, Olympic squad, Australia's senior squad vs Manchester United 1999.
Ambitions For 2000: To make Olympic squad, win Medal and cement first team spot with Ajax.
Most Memorable Moment: Signing up with Ajax last October.
Most Regrettable Moment: None as yet.
Hobbies Outside Soccer: Fishing and most other sports.
Best Goal You've Seen Scored: Damian Mori's from the halfway mark for Adelaide City.
Favourite Food: Mum's cooking.
Favourite Drink: Raspberry cordial
Car You Drive: My Mum's Laser when I'm in Australia.
Favourite T.V.Show: Seinfeld.
T.V. Show You Refuse To Watch: Judge Judy.
Favourite Movie: Charlie and The Chocolate Factory.
Favourite Actor-Actress: Tom Cruise and Michelle Pheiffer.
Preferred Music: Screaming Jets.
Least Preferred Music: Techno.
Favourite Comedian: Eddie Murphy and Jerry Seinfeld.
Pet Hates: Smokers.
Person You Would Like To Meet: My future wife.

By John Economos

The Good Oil ...



By John Economos

Arnold swears that he has not 'killed a Chinaman' as far as he knows with his team languishing fifth from the bottom.

Last Sunday night he sat back and painfully watched his side get walloped 3-1 by Sydney Olympic at the Belmore Sports Ground, in a match that the League leaders should have scored another three.

Arnold has had to battle in recent matches without the services of twin central defenders Matthew Bingley (quad), Mark Rudan (wrist), striker David Seal (quad) and Shane Lyons (ankle).

Former Italian World Cup

Graham Arnold: Why would you want to coach in the NSL?

star midfielder Nicola Berti's arrival two weeks ago, promised to bring a huge ray of hope, plus a string of wins for the Spirit.

No one must question Berti's previous professional credentials. Prestigious to say the least.

But with no fitness, the 32 year old Italian's presence has been of no value to Arnold whatsoever. In fact Berti's two matches have been a significant handicap for Arnold and the Spirit.

Shouldn't a contracted and high profiled pro, amongst his luggage, have included fitness?

Berti was coming to help a team mid-season, not pre-season.

But as the Man of Steak Knives fame used to say on TV..." but there's more ... much more."

Compounding matters, Arnold's plight plunged further last week.

Off-field financial and legal wrangles left Arnold without the services of another two of his stars, those of playmaker Robbie Enes and pacey striker Tony Perinich.

So four plus one, plus two, equals seven players 'out of action' for the Spirit. Far too many to do without.

And all seven players 'missing in action' have not been through any wrong doings by coach Arnold.

This Friday night the Spirit must face up to the League's third placed outfit, the mobile and hungry Wollongong Wolves.

Wollongong's experienced twin strike force of Stuart Young and Esala Masi scored all three goals last Sunday night at Brandon Park where they crushed the Auckland Kingz 3-1.

●●●●

WHO's the mystery goalscoring international defender that Marconi is about to sign up?

Maybe there could be more developments by next week.

●●●●

ROBBIE STANTON, the Wollongong Wolves' sweeper knocked up his 250th match in the NSL last Sunday at Brandon Park against the Auckland Kingz.

The placid Stanton amassed his 'two and a half tons' in the NSL whilst also playing for Sydney United and Marconi before joining the Wolves.

Robbie Stanton

●●●●

THE MELBOURNE KNIGHTS last Sunday night whilst in the process of defeating Sydney United in Sydney by 1-2, have now scored a progressive total of 700 goals in the National Soccer League.

Only four other teams have surpassed this tally of goals in the NSL.

Michael Reda

To date, and including last weekends matches, they are:

Marconi Stallions	**1,145.**
South Melbourne	**1,054.**
Adelaide City	**970.**
Sydney Olympic	**914.**

●●●●

SYDNEY UNITED tomorrow night (Wednesday) will have a friendly hit out against the NSW Amateur side, Forrest Killarney.

United's first team will play at the Sydney United Sports Centre and entry will be free of charge.

Ivan Petkovic

●●●●

MARCONI's Youth squad currently in Italy participating for the fifth straight year in Europe's most prestigious 52nd Viareggio Tournament, lost their first match 1-0 through a dubious penalty decision against Italian side SS Napoli played in Florence.

In their second game played last Friday morning against Brazilian side Campinas F.C., (the Club which just happens to be owned by former Brazilian international ace Careca) Marconi went down 1-0.

In the last match of Phase One played yesterday (Monday) morning, Marconi went down again, this time by 2-1 to A.C. Perugia.

Scorer for Marconi was Sydney United's tough defender Eddy Bosnar who travelled with Marconi as a guest player.

No less than a record 40 teams from 12 nations have entered the Viareggio Tournament this year.

The Marconi Youth team, coached by former international defender Jean Paul De Marigny, had been bracketted in Group Four with Brazil's Campinas F.C., and two Italian sides S.S.Napoli and A.C. Perugia.

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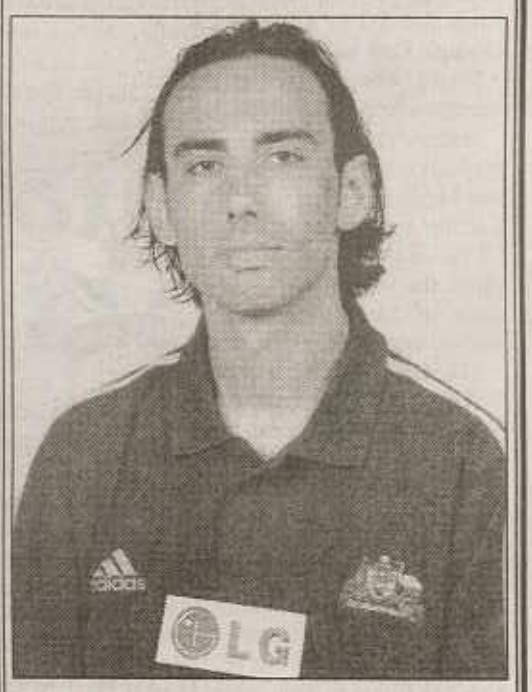
OLYMPIC GAMES 2000 SQUAD MEMBER

Profile N° 160

TANSEL BASER



Date Of Birth: 17th April 1978.
Birthplace: Melbourne.
Previous Clubs: South Melbourne.
Current Club:. Trabzonspor F.C.
Current Position: Left back.
Nickname: None.
Occupation: Fulltime player.
Best Aspect Of Your Game: Defensively strong, good in the air.
Most Difficult Opponent: Brett Emerton.
Most Impressive Local Player: Paul Trimboli.
Favourite Overseas Player: Kevin Muscat.
Favourite Overseas Club: Torino.
What Qualities Make For A Good Coach: To have a good knowledge of the game.
Honours: Under 20s, Olympic squad, two NSL Championships with South Melbourne.
Ambitions For 2000: To make the Olympics and gain a better club after my current contract ends.
Most Memorable Moment: Beating Perugia in the Totto Cup (3-1 after extra time) in Italy.
Most Regrettable Moment: None so far.
Hobbies Outside Soccer: A.F.L. and golf.
Best Goal You've Seen Scored: Marco Van Basten's in the 1988 Euro final.
Favourite Food: Pasta.
Favourite Drink: Orange juice.
Car You Drive: Holden Commodore.
Favourite T.V.Show: 'Friends' and Seinfeld.
T.V. Show You Refuse To Watch: None.
Favourite Movie: 'Braveheart' and 'Rudy'
Favourite Actor-Actress: Mel Gibson and Sandra Bullock.
Preferred Music: R & B.
Least Preferred Music: Heavy Metal.
Favourite Comedian: Seinfeld.
Pet Hates: Snakes and spiders.
Person You Would Like To Meet: Muhammad Ali.

By John Economos

STICCA BLOWS HIS STACK

By Bert van bedaf

Renowned for his spontaneous combustion, Carlton official Lou Sticca reduced Philippines' live volcano Mayon to a modest campfire with a blistering dressingroom outburst after the Blues lost 2-1 to Adelaide City at Olympic Park last Friday night.

Sticca, who resigned as general manager a fortnight ago to pursue a career in player management and finishes at Carlton today (Tuesday), shook the very foundations of Melbourne's unloved soccer stadium.

The Blues were pathetic, gifting Adelaide two goals. They gave Damian Mori a cheap header by leaving him unmarked in the box, and handed Aurelio Vidmar a nice free-kick just outside the box following an undisciplined shirt-tug.

The Blues scored with a penalty that no-body wanted to take. Finally,

Mark Atkinson stepped up and struck the net. He later said he'd taken penalties before in New Zealand and felt confident enough to slot it home.

But it wasn't enough to deny the Force their victory. It was all too much for Sticca, who has given everything to see the Blues succeed, having been there from the start four years ago.

"You're all a f#!*ing disgrace. Everything from the support staff right through," he thundered, a spray of expletives deleted.

"I'm still the general manager and I'll say what I'll have to say. Four f#!*ing years of my life and it's come this far. We're a disgrace. We're not a club. There're no excuses. I'm blaming every one of you, including me.

"I can't give any more! I've quit. I've had the guts to quit. You should have a look at yourselves and maybe some of you should quit too. What happened here tonight is a disgrace," Sticca roared.

Sticca pointed the finger at imports Stuart Slater, who appeared to make a retort, prompting Sticca to shout, "Shut the f#!*k up and listen", and striker Mike Conroy, whom he accused of "prancing around", since he's yet to score an NSL goal.

It was vintage Sticca stuff, turned on at full blast, of which he did not regret a word later. "Things had to be said and I'm honest, if I was still general manager next week there would be two or three players who'd be gone by then," he said.

Lou Sticca:

Carlton coach Stuart Munro said he was at a loss to understand why his instructions aren't getting through to the players and why they are not motivated enough to secure a finals' berth.

"There's lack of discipline. This is absolutely killing us. Every week we're conceding a goal or two. It's absolutely disgraceful," Munro said.

"The way it's been the last two games (Carlton lost 3-0 to Melbourne Knights in the previous round), it's been shocking. We're all playing for our contract, myself included, considering the standard of football we're playing in the last 10 weeks.

"The players are not on top of their game and they realise that. Not one of the strikers or other players put their hand up to take the penalty.

That told me an awful lot about their confidence," he said.

Commenting on Sticca's volcanic eruption, Munro said, "It was unfortunate. It happened in the dressing room and it wasn't meant to be for anybody else. But it was something that had to be said. I've been trying to motivate the players for weeks. Sometimes it needs somebody else to come in and try and make them realise what it means to play for this club."

VICTORIAN STATE LEAGUE

RINGWOOD CITY AVERT DISASTER

By Bert van Bedaf

Ringwood City secretary Chris Foley confirmed a merger or sale of the club was narrowly averted several weeks ago. The club is financially strapped and struggling to field a side in the state competition, kicking of next month.

Formerly known as Ringwood Wilhelmina, with a rich history of Dutch migrant backing, the State League second division club was nearly taken over by a league rival, the Serbian-backed Fitzroy City Soccer Club.

Ringwood members also rejected an offer by Victorian soccer queen Malissa Fischer-Massa to take a 51 per cent share in the club, effectively privatising the club and giving Fischer-Massa majority ownership.

"We were struggling for players and finances," Foley said.

"We received an offer from Fitzroy to merge with us and bring their players and members with them. The committee put it to the members and they rejected it.

"They decided we should manage our own affairs. They've put in funds themselves and we're looking forward to a strong year," he said.

Fischer-Massa, who is currently president of Victorian Premier League club Bentleigh Greens had been a major sponsor of Ringwood City in the past.

A business woman, Fischer-Massa has also been associated with other VPL clubs, including former triple champion Altona Magic and formerly the Serbian-backed Springvale White Eagles, who were relegated to the State League last season.

"Malissa wanted to buy 51 per cent of Ringwood City, so that she would have control," Foley said.

"But it was rejected outright. We don't have shares. She wanted to privatise the club, but that was not on. The committee rejected her offer and the members were informed and agreed.

"She also wanted to nominate her own president and that is impossible under our constitution. For a start to become president, the candidate needs to be a member of the club and the members vote for our office bearers.

"We would not have had a Ringwood City Soccer Club, but the Malissa Fischer-Massa Soccer Club," he said.

Foley said the privatisation offer was made over the telephone. "There's nothing in writing," Foley said.

"I suggested she could always be a major sponsor again, but she said, 'you've got to be joking. I'll only put money in unless I run the show' and that was the end of it," he said.

SOUTH AUST. PREMIER LEAGUE

IVANOVIC MAKES HIS MARK AS COACH

By Allan Crisp

Former Socceroo sweeper Milan Invanovic celebrated his first Premier League coaching success on Satruday when his young Adelaide City side toppled Metro Stars 5-1.

"I'm very happy for the boys" Ivanovic said. "This win will be a tremendous confidence boost for the players."

City led fellow promoted Metro by a goal at half time, but netted three in an inspired 30-minute burst before slotting in a sealer.

The win was accomplished without Michael Cartwright, who was recalled to City's NSL team to replace Atila Hornjik, who has returned to Europe after receiving a DCM from coach Zoran Matic.

"We also missed Josh Romanowicz, who is suffering from a knee injury," Ivanovic said.

Meanwhile, Ivanovic is contemplating a comeback as a player with SA Amateur League side Fulham United when the new season starts next month.

Why not turn out for city in the Premier League as player-coach? "No, that would not be fair to take the place of one of our young boys."

Blue Eagles continued their scintillating early form with a 4-0 win over reigning champions Cumberland Foxes.

Michael Brooks hit home his third goal from two games to head the Eagles goal onslaught and keep the Blues ahead of fellow front runners, Raiders and Modbury Jets.

Raiders came from behind to down Croydon Kings 2-1 at Polonia Reserve where Kings sweeper Jamie Perin was sent off in the 17th minute after a second booking.

For the second successive week, Raiders substitute Justin Bralic came off the bench to snatch a late winner against the impressive Kings.

White City scored the first upset of the fledgling season by downing last season's beaten grand finalist, Port Lion Pirates.

SA Premier League Results

Modbury Jets 3 (J. Trimboli 2, Locke) **Birkalla 0.** Best – Modbury: Yates, Dobson, Trimboli; Birkalla: McGregor, Wilkinson, Plummer.

Campbelltown Red Devils 1 (David Menechella) **Elizabeth City 5** (D. Reynolds 2, S. Pearce 2, S. McMillan). Best – Red Devils: David Menechella, A. Allen, P. Beltrame; Elizabeth Rams: M. Henry, S. McMIllan, R. Bell.

Cumberland Foxes 0 Blue Eagles 4 (F. Sergi, M. Brooks, A. Ferrante, M. Kierno). Best – Foxes: P. Pezos, D. Gagliardi, N. Mitchell; Blue Eagles: F. Sergi, M. Brooks, C. Kokkinoplitis.

White City 2 (D. Stam, S. Ferreira) **Port Lion 1** (S. Parissos). Best – White City: D. Stam, R. Plunkett, D. Ferreira; Port Lion: S. Parissos, G. Tsonis, F. Keegan.

Raiders 2 (S. Zilic, J. Bralic). **Croydon Kings 1** (J. Porter). Best – Raiders; S. Zilic, L. DaRocha, S. Morrison; Croydon: J. Porter, E. Scalzi, M. Pirone.

Metro Stars 1 (M. Berlingeri) **Adelaide City 5** (L. Mantelis, N. Budin, R. Saraceno, D. Thompson, S. Tunbridge). Best – Metro Stars: M. Berlingeri, J. Berlingeri, R. Sen; aCity: S. Cecere, A. Scarsella, S. Tunbridge.

SA State League Results Seaford 1, Enfield Falcons 3; Northern Demons 0, Para Hills Knights 3; Panthers 4, Port Pirie City 2; Western Strikers 3, Olympic FC 3; Salisbury 1, Noarlunga 2; Adelaide Hills 3, Cobras 1.

Round 3 - Premier League

Friday March 3
Port Lion v Raiders

Saturday March 4
Blue Eagles v White City
Campbelltown v Cumberland
Birkalla v Metro Stars
Croydon Kings v Modbury
Elizabeth City v Adelaide City

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Adelaide Blue Eagle	2	2	0	0	8	0	6
Raiders	2	2	0	0	6	2	6
Modbury	2	2	0	0	4	0	6
Elizabeth City	2	1	1	0	6	2	4
Adelaide City	2	1	0	1	5	2	3
White City Warriors	2	1	0	1	2	2	3
Port Adelaide Lion	2	1	0	1	2	2	3
Croydon Kings	2	1	0	1	2	2	3
Metro Stars	2	0	1	1	2	6	1
Cumberland United	2	0	0	2	0	5	0
W.T. Birkalla	2	0	0	2	1	7	0
Cambelltown City	2	0	0	2	1	9	0

NO SECOND DIVISION

Clubs Get 12 Months Grace

By Bert van Bedaf

Soccer Australia will not introduce a second division of the national league this year.

Having decided to postpone reforms of the NSL by a year, the introduction of a second division will also be shelved for 12 months, much to the dismay of the chairman of the Victorian Soccer Federation, Manny Galanos.

"Division two for this year won't be taking place. Hopefully it will be introduced for October 2001, but it's not happening this year, unfortunately," Galanos said after Soccer Australia's annual general meeting, held in Sydney last weekend.

"There's not going to be a restructure (of the NSL) this October (reducing competition from 16 to 12 clubs). The NSL clubs won't sign off to agree to restructure after the Olympics. No restructure, no division two.

It's very disappointing," Galanos said.

"But we have to be realistic. I'm confident it will happen in 2001.

Better that it happens late than never. The new marketers (Bertie Mariani and Dominic Galati) want a second division. And there are people at Soccer Australia who also believe it is a good idea," he said.

Mariani and Galati, who head the Sydney-based sports marketing group, International Entertainment Corporation, have signed a three-year agreement with Soccer Australia, with a four-year option, to promote the sport in Australia.

They are prepared to invest $20 million per year to lift the profiles of the Socceroos, Olyroos and the NSL.

Soccer Australia's backing down on both fronts - NSL reforms and a division two - is a significant set-back according to Galanos, who favoured reforms to take place sooner rather than later, particularly since the spotlight will be on soccer because of the Olympic Games and World Cup qualification.

VSF chairman since early this year, Galanos believed restructuring at the national level should not have been delayed by another season, as Soccer Australia recently offered national league clubs, and the introduction of an NSL second division should have been implemented immediately after the Sydney Olympics in October.

"For the sake of Victorian soccer, we wanted a second division of the national league to happen sooner rather than later," Galanos said.

"It would give the Victorian Premier League more credibility. It would become a stepping stone to a second NSL division, and with promotion and relegation in place it would give (state league) clubs the opportunity to reach the pinnacle of national soccer," he said.

As far as reforms go, the Victorian Soccer Federation bit the bullet last season, reducing the VPL from 16 to 12 clubs.

Manny Galanos: Disappointed.

It also restructured the State Leagues in zones, modified its reserves competition, and through former chairman Joe Brondolino led the push for an NSL second division.

Brondolino is now a commissioner of Soccer Australia and Galanos follows the Brondolino line.

"Joe was an excellent chairman. He made some hard decisions and it was critical there was some continuity. It was felt it would continue with myself as chairman," Galanos said.

Reducing the league to 12 clubs was part of making the VPL more competitive and therefore more attractive for spectators.

Turning a winter game into summer soccer was also designed to attract bigger crowds, which proved the case last season and again this season.

Fans have turned up in generous numbers (2000 or more) to some of the bigger games at the better venues, at Green Gully and Bulleen.

Green Gully at its Reserve and Bulleen at the Veneto Social Club have licensed clubs, offering meals and entertainment. The lucrative gaming rooms would also give them a solid financial base to be competitive in a second division.

Victorian soccer is attracting not only the usual quota of dedicated fans but also spectators generally interested in soccer, who can now watch the game in seated comfort on covered grandstands (at Bulleen, Melbourne Raiders, Preston or Heidelberg).

"We've come off a low base, but there have been significant improvements over the last few seasons. Crowds have substantially increased and the standard of soccer has improved, also because of better surfaces and better (weather) conditions," Galanos said.

Having been part of major reforms in Victoria as a commissioner (for three years) before becoming chairman, Galanos is not hiding his feelings regarding Soccer Australia's tardiness in implementing its Soccer 21 restructuring plans.

"Soccer 21 has been out for three years and they're still talking about it. I've been involved in meeting after meeting. Will they ever implement it?" Galanos said.

"We need to do what's good for the game. We have the Olympics this year and the Socceroos are playing qualification matches for the World Cup in 2002.

"The focus will be on soccer and we should be taking advantage of that.

We should have implemented the restructuring process immediately after the Olympics and have a second division. We have the opportunity to gain good publicity at the moment. The hard decisions should have been made now," he said.

SOUTHS DENY WALKOUT

By Bert van Bedaf

South Melbourne general manager Damien Phillips would not confirm or deny whether player George Goutzioulis had walked out on the club last week.

According to Greek radio reports Goutzioulis was apparently the only player not to have received his bonus fee from South's world club trip to Brazil last January.

George Goutzioulos: Walkout denied by Souths.

"I'm not so sure he walked out on the club. I don't know about that. I'm not sure there's anything to it at the moment," Phillips said.

Goutzioulis was not in the starting 11 nor on the bench in the game against Marconi Stallions last Sunday. South lost the match 2-1.

"He was at the game. Why would a player who you said has walked out on the club attend the game," Phillips said.

As far as the Brazil bonuses were concerned, Phillips said all players had been paid.

"All payments with all players have been finalised," Phillips said.

Goutzioulis included? "I can't comment on that. I can't discuss contractual arrangements with players," Phillips said.

Meanwhile, the recent death of a young Melbourne woman, Alisha Horan, of a drug overdose, involving former Geelong Football Club legend Gary Ablett, now also has South Melbourne embroiled.

A report in Melbourne's Sunday Herald Sun states two men were seen drinking with Ablett in a South Melbourne hotel and "police are believed to have identified one of the men as a leading soccer player".

The report also quoted a mystery businessman as saying, "Gary also met (other) sports people, including a player from South Melbourne Soccer Club."

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TOWARDS SYDNEY 2000

Olyroo file #10

CHRIS COYNE

AT A GLANCE ...

Full Name:	Christopher John Coyne
Club:	West Ham United
Date Of Birth:	20th December 1978
Left or right footed?	Both, but mainly right
Eye Colour:	Blue
Hair Colour:	Brown
Height:	185cm
Weight:	86kg
Positions Played:	Defender

THE STATS ...

LG Under-23 Appearances (Vs Country)	6
LG Under-23 Goals (Vs Country)	0
National Representative Honours (other):	Under-17 World Cup – 1995 Ecuador
Number of Seasons with current Club:	5
Clubs Played For (current first):	West Ham United, Perth Italia
Junior Clubs:	Perth Italia, Olympic, Sorrento
Age I started playing soccer:	5

THE LOOK FORWARD ...

Career Highlight to date: Playing in the FA Youth Final at Anfield, in front of 20,000 people.
Biggest Achievement to date: Playing at the Under-17 World Cup - Ecuador, 1995.
Ambition: To play at the highest level
Words of Advice: "Do what you're good at"
Best advice Received: "Strive to be the best you can at everything you do." - my Dad

PERSONALITY ...

Favourite Actor:	Robert De Niro
Favourite Actress:	Cameron Diaz
Last Movie seen:	"There's Something About Mary"

Name your Top 5 Movies:
Goodfellas
Godfather 1
Star Wars
Seven
Shawshank Redemption

Favourite Comedian:	Chubby Brown
Last Book Read:	Golden Fox by Bryce Courtney
Favourite Magazine:	FHM
Best ever concert (who, where, when?):	Big Day Out in Fremantle 4 years ago

List 5 CDs you couldn't live without:
Pearl Jam - "Vitalogy"
The Doors - "Greatest Hits"
REM - "Automatic For The People"
Kiss FM - "Speed Garage Anthems"
Alanis Morrisette - "Jagged Little Pill"

Favourite TV Show:	Just Shoot Me
Favourite TV Character:	Jerry Seinfeld
Favourite Cartoon Characters:	Ren & Stimpy

THE PEERS ...

Favourite Overseas Player:	Ian Wright
Favourite Overseas Team:	Barcelona
Most Admired Australian (based local):	Paul Trimboli
Most Admired Australian (based OS):	Mark Bosnich
Most Admired Defender:	Franco Baresi
Most Admired Midfielder:	Emmanuel Petit
Most Admired Striker:	I don't like strikers!
Most Admired Goalkeeper:	Peter Shilton
Hardest Opponent (player):	John Hartson when at Arsenal
Hardest Opponent (team):	Ian Wright
Dream choice of which world league?	Spanish or Italian
Most admired Sportsperson:	Muhammad Ali

Q: You are really an unknown quantity as far as many Australian soccer supporters are concerned – so WHO IS CHRIS COYNE?

A: Chris Coyne is a hard working player who has an honest love of soccer, and who's trying to earn a decent earning away from home. I'd say I'm a good defender, a good hard tackler .. I might not be the quickest player on the park, but I make up for it with a good football brain. I'm a strong lad and I feel I can help the squad through the experience of having played in Europe for the past 5 years.

Q: How do you think Sydney 2000 could change your life and the profile of Australian Soccer?

A: I think Sydney 2000 could have an immense impact on both. If we have a good run at the Games, then basically the same thing could happen as happened to the USA at World Cup 94 – all of a sudden soccer is everywhere – basically, soccer is an unknown entity to many people in Australia, and this is the opportunity to profile the sport to a lot more people. The other football codes have all had their turn, and now it's ours.

Q: Why will the LG Under-23s perform well at Sydney 2000?

A: Because we're the home team, and because we hate to lose.

Q: How did you find the recent camp in Adelaide, and how was it different from previous Camps?

A: It was a good camp to be in because finally, we're coming down to the business end of things. This camp was a lot more intense. There were a lot more European based players involved than previous camps I've been involved in, and a lot of competition for places.

Also, the three games in a week put pressure on everyone to back-up, but that's exactly what we're going to be going through in Olympic competition. Overall, the Four Nation Tournament was unique so far because of the number of games, and I feel it was a good lead in to Sydney 2000.

Q: You mentioned the competition for places, how are you and your fellow players starting to react to this?

A: I think players are players – all of us are hoping to make the squad, but we know that we can't all make it, so if we don't, most players will take it on the chin basically because football is a short career, so you have to get on with it.

Chris Coyne: In action recently against Nigeria in the Four Nations Tournament in Adelaide.

Representing Australia at the Olympic Games will be the pinnacle of a lot of careers, but if you don't make it, you have to pick yourself up and get on with it.

Q: What motivates you?

A: I am very patriotic toward Australia, so I couldn't think of anything better than walking out and playing for my country – I don't think you need much more motivation than that.

Q: Being very much "by yourself" in England, is there someone that helps you, particularly mentally, cope with the mounting pressure of trying to secure a spot in the LG Under-23 Squad.

A: On the park, not really. At the end of the day, the football world is a very transient one, and it boils down to thinking about yourself and your needs within the team structure. That's not a bad thing, because if you don't want it enough, you may as well not start.

It was good having Stan (Lazaridis) here (West Ham) when he was here, we got on well and would talk quite a bit, but in the end, as does every player, he was fighting for his position in the team, and he's now moved on to Birmingham City.

Alvin Martin, who played for England in the 1986 World Cup took me under his wing when I first came on board, when we played at the back, he'd make sure he'd give me words of confidence, getting in my ear, dropping little hints.

Off the park, my wife Rebecca helps me, basically, since neither of us has any family over here, we look after each other.

Q: What are the pros and cons of fighting for selection while playing overseas?

A: The worst thing going against playing overseas would be that no one sees you play on a regular basis – although I suppose the good side to that is if you have a bad game, no one sees that either!

It would be a shame to not make a squad because of where you play – if you're left out, you'd want it to be because you're not playing well, not because you're an unknown quantity.

Robbo (Mark Robertson) and I have discussed this actually, and we even thought about playing in the NSL for the opportunity to be in the Olympic Squad – but in the end, no matter where you're playing, we know that there are tabs being kept on our performances, so that's OK. As long as you know you're in the minds of the coaching staff, that's the important thing because you don't want to become the forgotten man, and I think that's the same for everyone playing overseas at the moment.

Q: Is there any one particular member of this current squad who you feel stands out?

A: Obviously Foxey – Hayden Foxe, he's just a freak of a player. Also, I think that Vinnie Grella stands out as a player – his technical ability is outstanding and while he may not be the quickest player on the park, he makes up for it because he's such a clever player – you can tell he's playing in Italy because he's playing like an Italian – he's a ruthless tough midfielder.

Q: Is there a particular Olympian who inspires you, and why?

A: Cathy Freeman – I think she's exceptional.

Q: Is there any particular team that you are looking forward to facing at the Olympic Games, and why?

A: I would have loved to have faced England in the Olympic arena because a lot of my mates who I play against over here would have been there. I don't think I particularly want to face Brazil, but someone like a France or a Spain would be good, a high profile glamour side would be a good challenge.

Q: And your final words for the Australian public?

A: If people back us and come out and support us as I know they will, then I think we'll give everyone a very pleasant surprise as to how well we can play soccer in Australia. We'll keep them excited, enthralled and on the edge of their seats.

Feature courtesy of Soccer Australia media department. Already profiled Brett Emerton, Steven Laybutt, Lucas Neill, Michael Curcija, Nick Rizzo, Jacob Burns, Daniel Allsopp, Tansel Baser and Mile Sterjovski.

"I couldn't think of anything better than walking out and playing for my country."

COSMOS STRETCH THEIR LEGS

By Graham Cooke

The Canberra Cosmos are going to the dogs - that's official. They will be at the Canberra Greyhound Racing Club's track on Sunday to support their man in a dramatic contest with the canine speedsters.

Harry James, who holds the club record in training sprints, will be matched against a greyhound over 310 metres.

Cosmos coach Tom Sermanni says interest in greyhound racing has boomed at the club since Supa Ore, part owned by skipper Robbie Hooker and striker Glen Kolpak, began winning races.

The match race will be part of a charity day put on jointly by the Cosmos and the racing club, during which players will stage coaching clinics for children, and provide the goalkeeper for an inter-schools shoot-out competition. Members of the Australian Matildas are also expected to put in an appearance.

Sermanni said a match between the Cosmos and the full Malaysian national team will take place on March 9 at the Australian Institute of Sport.

The contest had been first suggested over Christmas, when former AIS head coach Ron Smith, who is now the national director of coaching for Malaysia, was in Canberra on holiday.

"It's a good idea from everyone's point of view," Sermanni said.

"The Malaysians want to come here for games and training as part of their preparations for the Asian Games, and we will benefit by being able to give some of our fringe players a run.

"The season is two thirds over and it will be a big chance for some members of the squad to prove they have a future at the Cosmos."

Sermanni now has 24 members of his 25-strong squad in training — only Kolpak, with a twisted ankle, is currently unavailable for selection.

Harry James: To race against a Greyhound.

FORCED RE-SHUFFLE FOR SOCCER CANBERRA

By Graham Cooke

Soccer Canberra has been forced into a last-minute reorganisation of the ACT competition after the demise of one major club and the possible withdrawal of another.

As a result the Premier League second division has been scrapped, and its remaining clubs folded into the ACT State League first division.

Queanbeyan City, relegated from Premier One after finishing bottom of that competition, went out of existence several weeks ago, ending a 35-year run in local football.

Now O'Connor Knights appear to be on the brink of extinction. The club finished on top of Premier Two last season but were denied promotion in favour of second-placed Tuggeranong United, who beat them in the grand final.

The Knights poured considerable resources into winning a premiership place and were still campaigning to have their exclusion overturned up until a week ago. However, it appears many at the club have now lost heart.

They have withdrawn from the early-season Federation Cup competition and have been given a week by Soccer Canberra to state their intentions for the main league season.

SC's chief executive, Robert Bennett, said the State League will now consist of six divisions. "The Knights' decision will not effect things one way or another," he said. "They have been allocated a place in State League One, and if they don't take it up the competition will continue with nine clubs and a bye.

"Overall, our membership has not suffered, with several new teams coming into the lower divisions."

WOLLONGONG NEWS

By Otto Bader

Sitting quietly in the grand stand at Brandon Park it is very interesting to observe the reaction of supporters from both teams playing.

Obviously the home team crowd makes usually most noise, but to be fair even the locals acknowledge good ball movements by visiting sides. Lately it showed that both groups seemed to be annoyed with some referees.

They are knowledgeable enough to anticipate what is coming in respect of bookings by certain whistle blowers. Some very strange decisions have upset the spectators and coaches alike.

The fans come to watch teams and star players, not the referee, the less he is noticed the better his control is respected.

■■■

Numbers game - the Wolves are up to play their 512th game in the NSL.

The fifth highest in the NSL's history. The Wolves have won 264 games, drawn 134 and lost 213, scored 665 goals but surprisingly conceded 776. They have been a proud member club of the NSL since 1981. Their opening game was at the old Wollongong Showground under coach Ken Morten.

■■■

Anthony Surjan – departs Wollongong after four and a half years. One of the more experienced players, a classy midfield schemer, he has decided to quit, allegedly not satisfied with selection decisions for the starting line up.

It is a well known fact that a coach's hand and actions are forced by expected success and/or failure. He – the soccer coach or any other code's coach – lives by that truth. His decision is final and any professionally run club obeys that unwritten law. If results go against the coach, the critics come out quick and the fans become restless or stay away. Most players are governed by team discipline and always respect the coach's last word. Players unwilling to acknowledge his authority are not helpful in stabilising team morale. The coach can easily become a victim of a poor run and will take actions he thinks necessary, selecting and rotating positions within the side to overcome oppositions. The coach of any sporting side is the BOSS, his word is final and clubs would not tolerate it any other way so long as the side is successful.

■■■

David Cervinski – the Wolves tower of strength in their defence was once more nominated as Man of the Match or Best on Ground player at the last home game. Fans agree he deserves his award which brings some other benefits like a $40 – petrol voucher and a $100 – voucher for the Lagoon Seafood Restaurant in Stuart Park, Wollongong with it. Coach and supporters hope the burly defender keeps performing well for the rest of the season.

■■■

Noticed – the German National team is in Asia from 14/12 to 22/12/00 planning to play in China, Thailand and South Korea. What about Australia, coming down to Brandon Park? Soccer Australia should be aware of the tour and coach Frank Farina perhaps could be interested.

■■■

Speedy Wolves – coach Nick Theodorakopoulos has employed the services of a specialised sprint trainer to assist the Wolves fitness as the end of what is proving to be a gruelling NSL season draws to a close. Laura Elms will put the players through their paces every Tuesday night in a bid to strengthen their aim at keeping a top position.

RAKIC JOINS RANKS

Playing their opening game of the season in Canberra's Bruce Stadium had its drawbacks for Monaro and Gungahlin Juventus on February 20. As this picture shows, the pitch still carried the markings from the last rugby league match and the players had to contend with an almost constant string of interviews being carried out as part of the stadium's Olympic Open Day.

By Graham Cooke

Andy Rakic became the latest in a long line of players produced by Canberra Deakin to play in the National League when he made his debut for Sydney United in the recent match against Marconi.

Rakic joined United in mid-season and has played in the National Youth League until now. He was included on the first-team bench against Marconi and came on in the 51st minute.

His friend and mentor, Tony Pangallo, said reports from Sydney were favourable. "He didn't do anything spectacular, but everyone says he looked fairly comfortable out there," Pangallo said.

That same weekend was not so favourable for Rakic's older brother, John. He was sent off for the first time in his career after collecting a second cautionable offence while playing for Monaro against Gungahlin Juventus in the ACT Federation Cup.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

HIGH PRIORITIES

Dear Sir,

I am a keen soccer fan and I am concerned that such a well run club like Northern Spirit, continue to persist with Graham Arnold as coach.

I have been to all their home games this year and their performances seem to be getting worse, irrespective of results.

Graham Arnold (Assistant National Coach - god forgive) carries on like a local park coach, not a coach of the best run club in Australia. He seems to have it out for Matthew Langdon, because he seems to get hammered every time.

In my opinion (and it is all about opinions) he has got it wrong from the beginning. He Hasn't replaced Marusic (he had Gabriel Mendez available who could have played the same role, but he chose to get rid of him)

* Hasn't had a decent striker at the club, David Seal would struggle in Super League (A club like Northern Spirit deserves a high-quality striker, if not available in Australia go overseas and find one).

* Has had players who wanted to play for the club, but in his opinion were not good enough but are now doing well at other clubs.

I'm keen to see how long things will continue, because I feel that a Professional Club like Northern Spirit deserves far better.

Fasiel Munas
Eastwood, NSW

Basil Scarsella: Soccer Australia Chairman.

You're right about one thing...it's all about opinions.

You make some valid points about Arnold's decisions, or lack thereof as a coach, but what remains clear to me is that although probably doing a few things differently if he had the season over again, he has had more than his far share of players this season who have not given 100 per cent.

No coach can win games without the full commitment of his players.

Perhaps if Graham had that, he wouldn't look like a 'local park coach' some of the time. - Ed.

NSL BACKFLIP

Dear Sir,

It's good to see where the NSL have done a backflip in insisting on a 12 team competition for next season, but have decided to defer it to the following season (2001-2002) as I mentioned they should do in an earlier letter of mine printed last year.

By giving clubs more time to get their house in order and avoiding litigation, we may be able to get a better standard of competition in future with less teams involved.

The big question is how do you get a fair and equitable draw with 12 teams without going to a 44 round season, which is far too long.

The only other way apart from these silly unfair Mickey Mouse draws, is to go down to 10 teams in all.

A reduction down to 10 may sound a lot, but really do we have enough decent talent left in this country for any more than that, to play in the top National competition.

John Kosmina hit the nail on the head recently when he mentioned that many players are being paid good money under false pretences, when they don't deserve it.

A 10 team competition would not only produce a fair 36 rounds of competition, but also compress the best available talent down into those 10 teams remaining.

Apart from the usual four club's mentioned for the axe, Queensland has to lose the Brisbane Strikers who are not well supported enough for a one team city of one-and-a-half million people, then so be it.

The other disappointment has to be Carlton, who have done everything right except draw decent crowds to there games.

Maybe South Melbourne is the only team needed from Victoria at this stage, at the National level of competition.

As for the Auckland Kingz, I don't believe they should be sacrificed for other Australian clubs as it benefits Australia in the long term if we not only have a strong Auckland team, but also a strong New Zealand National side, which includes a stronger Oceania region, for World Cup finals qualifying purposes.

So lets see if the NSL board will go that one step further by insisting on going down to 10 teams instead of 12 for the 2001-2002 season, as 36 rounds starting in late August or early September is long enough and more importantly fair enough to match.

Dominic Scullino,
Nerang. QLD.

Let's get the transition from 16 to 12 right first. Then we'll worry about 10.

That has been the problem with Soccer in Australia for years now - we're always trying to solve the second problem before solving the first.

Let's try not to leave any unfinished business. We'll all be better off that way. - Ed.

PUZZLING COVERAGE BY SEVEN

Dear Sir,

I have never been impressed with Channel 7's coverage of Football, and it puzzles me to wonder how Soccer Australia striped the rights off SBS.

You might remember, but the Gold Medal match in the Atlanta '96 Olympic Games, Channel 7 showed highlights of the game. The final score was 3-2, yet Channel 7 only showed the very last goal and made it look as if it was a 1-0 result. I called Channel 7 later and they said they would not replay the game and would not show the other goals.

I wonder if we'll get some fair coverage in this year's Olympics in Sydney?

I'm still angry at Channel 7 for showing the Australia vs Brazil match last year from the MCG at 11:30pm in Sydney, when over 80,000 spectators were present. I don't think there is one sport in Australia other than Football (Soccer) that did not get live coverage of the event when over 80,000 spectators were present.

Joe
by e-mail

Keep venting your frustration Joe. Eventually they will hear you and ALL of us. For further info contact :

Seven_screws_soccer@hotmail.com.au -Ed.

Send letters to

Australian and British Soccer Weekly

PO Box 155

Marrickville NSW 1475 or fax (02) 9550 9332

or e-mail to: soccerweekly@hotmail.com

JOINING FORCES

Dear Sir

As a founding member of the South Melbourne SC Supporters Group, I was recently approached by a group of fellow soccer fans to assist them in their cause to gain further soccer coverage on Channel 7.

Despite the fact that these supporters were from cross-town rivals Carlton SC, I found that as soccer supporters we had little option than to join forces for the good of the game.

Although a certain soccer federation has attempted to make our ambitions of persuading Channel Seven to show more soccer difficult, the group known as STAND (Seven Talks and Never Deliver) has taken many leaps and strides forward. We have formulated a base of supporters who will continue to place pressure on Channel 7, until certain changes are made to their soccer broadcasting policies.

Personally I am sick and tired of all commercial network efforts in showing soccer. How many times have we seen soccer riots from third world

nations on the news as compared to even the slightest bit of NSL highlights and scores?

As such the South Melbourne Supporters Group organised a petition, prior to South playing in Brazil, to encourage the commercial network to show as much footage of the World Club Championships as possible.

On December 31 1999, I personally hand delivered a copy of the 3,700 signatures to Channels 9 and 10 and the original copy to Channel 7.

Despite our efforts I am still to receive any response from the networks and we all know how much Channel Seven showed of South Melbourne's efforts - close to nothing.

They can't ignore their audience forever. The fans opportunity to have their say comes at a rally on Saturday March 4 2000, at 3.00 pm, where outside Channel Seven's studios in Melbourne, Sydney and Perth, fans will tell Channel Seven exactly what they think of their lack of soccer coverage. This will be a peaceful rally and I encourage all soccer supporters to get along.

There is strength in numbers!!

Peter Kartsidimas
South Melbourne SC Supporters Group
PO Box 2055
Lygon Street North
Vic 3057
Tel: 0412 602 932

As the Official publication of S.T.A.N.D., ABSW will happily support all fans who want to see the good of the game progress. Peaceful is best and yes, there is strength in numbers..

We're right behind you. - Ed.

seven_screws_soccer@hotmail.com

TASMANIA KINGZ?

Dear Sir,

I would like to point something to Mr Peter Bosi about the Parramatta Power. I agree with most Australian soccer fans that Auckland should not be in the National League.

For me instead of Auckland, why don't we have a team in Tasmania.

Back to the Power. I have been attending National League games for a long time but never felt very comfortable sitting in amongst Marconi supporters who are 99% Italians, Sydney United supporters who are 99% Croatians and Sydney Olympic supporters who are 99% Greek.

All clubs with ethnic ties are also sponsored by people or companies within their community (eg Brescia-Marconi).

These teams have no intention of at attracting people of other communities. Out here in Sydney's west we have soccer supporters that have a team to support.

I agree the crowds could be better, but if people take notice every week the crowd's at Parramatta Stadium are always the second or third best attended matches of the week.

So if our crowds are poor, then so are most of the other games.

Go To The Power.

Robert Borg,
Prospect. NSW.

I agree that Auckland probably shouldn't be in the NSL and Tasmania would be an interesting alternative.

But I find it difficul to agree with your 99 per cent statistic. NO club has a 99 per cent supporter base from one region - ethnic or otherwise.

And as far as sponsors go, it is not right for you to single out Brescia, or anyone else for that fact.

Brescia have supported Marconi with millions of dollars over the years. This is an economic decision.

Would you say no to such a long standing sponsorship arrangement?

Better yet, would you even be writing this letter if Marconi's sponsor were say...BHP?

I think not.

A little hypocritical, don't you think? - Ed.

LION TAUNTS

Dear Sir,

I am writing to set the record straight regarding some claims made by clowns that host a Sunday night NSL radio program run by Northern Spirit. The broadcast followed Norths' defeat last night by UTS Sydney Olympic.

These clowns claimed the UTS Sydney Olympic lion mascot "taunted" Norths fans after the first Olympic goal. That's pretty rich, coming from them.

I saw the lion pelted with cans and bottles by the Norths fans with said fans claiming the ridiculous, "You are inciting a riot!!", with their lovely cockney accents.

Their second claim was that "three flares were set off", well, in reality, only one was set off. One can only guess the Norths fans live in dreamland.

Their third claim was that they were "moved on" at half-time by police to the Northern end of Belmore behind the goal. That area has been to date noted as a danger area by Canterbury Council, denying all fans access to that area.

From what I saw on the night, Norths fans requested the move, due to the hill area being packed with patrons.

In addition, behind the goal is not the "hill area" therefore Norths fans escaped without paying the extra 10 dollars to watch the game, as the "hill area" is only five dollars. Norths you cheapskates!

I wonder if the hosts/clowns of the radio program know the meaning of the word ethics?

Gavin Clarke
Bass Hill, NSW

I wasn't at the game and I guess there are always two sides to a story. I would like to hear from the radio boys some time soon. Let's hope they're reading this. - Ed.

NATIONAL SOCCER LEAGUE

PARRAMATTA POWER 1
BRISBANE STRIKERS 1

By John Economos

Parramatta Power last Friday night was held to a tough fought 1-1 draw by Brisbane Strikers, a costly result for both teams which could ultimately see both fail to qualify for the 'top Six' in 11 weeks time.

The Power surged ahead in the 33rd minute through an excellent headed goal from powerful striker Jon Angelucci who raced to the back post to connect a cross fired in from the right by industrious midfielder and 'Man Of The Match', Jacob Burns.

The Power's robust midfielder Burns had his best game for the Power as he flung himself into tackles, attacked strongly and repeatedly switched flanks to fire in crosses.

John Kosmina's Brisbane Strikers came for a win as they attacked using three front runners in Peter Grierson, Stuart McLaren and Peter Dwyer, whilst the Power lined up with a steadier 5-3-2 formation.

Brisbane's midfield trio of David Pilic, Brad Ditton and Wayne Srhoj did exceptionally well to stem the Power's early fury which lacked a midfield general playmaker to steady the ship. Regular playmaker Walter Ardone missed the match through suspension and again will be missing in action for tomorrow (Wednesday) night's deferred match against Marconi at Bossley Park.

Just 12 minutes into the second session the Queenslanders stung back with a powerful headed goal from their lanky central defender Mark Battistin. Following a free kick taken from the left by tough defender Nick Meredith, the ball swung wide to the right where Battistin outclimbed the Power's defender Joe Vrkic to crash into the target the equalising goal.

The Power's Sterjovski played a one-two with Angelucci in the 11th minute but Sterjovski blasted straight into the body of Brisbane's goalie Clint Bolton.

David Barrett, the Power's right defender broke away in the 24th minute up the right flank but when he cut back a great ball in the box, his support failed him.

With the scoreboard still showing no goals, Power's brave left back Peter Bennett was lucky not to have conceded a penalty when he heavily barrelled Brisbane's striker and captain McLaren right off his feet, barely centimetres from the edge of the box. Referee Mark Shield was most correct in not awarding a penalty but a free kick instead.

Three minutes prior to Battistin equalising, Brisbane should have scored another goal as McLaren inexplicably from point-blank range steered his header from a David Pilic cross from the right, well over the top of the target.

Brisbane wisely dropped a man back into midfield for most of the second half as the Power frustratingly stepped up a gear, now desperate for a winning goal.

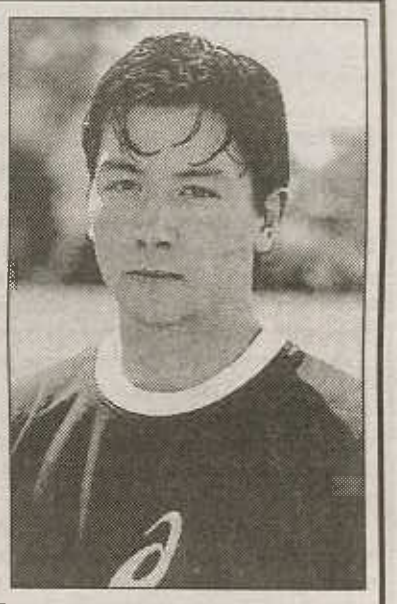
Brisbane's steel-tough left back Nick Meredith was k.o.'d for a few minutes when a violently struck ball cannoned off his head, but the 32-year-old war-horse ignored Kosmina's offer to sub him and battled on when he came to.

In contrast, Power's coach David Mitchell threw more coal into the fire as he brought off the bench his two fresh mobile attack men in Danny Townsend and Joel Griffiths to aid his twin strike-force of Sterjovski and Angelucci, but the Queenslanders' defence well marshalled by free-back Glenn Gwynne, stood firm keeping in place an unyielding barrier.

David Mitchell, the Power's coach, later reflected: "I thought we had more of the game and created more chances. Brisbane are a good team and are good on the counter attack, but we did enough to win this match.

I thought Jon Angelucci did well. But time is now running out but both of us (Brisbane included) can still make the Top Six, " ended Mitchell.

Meanwhile Brisbane's coach John Kosmina seemed acceptable to the result, stating: "It was a good battle but we were not clever in the first half as we could have done better. Our attitude in the second half was better.



Jacob Burns: Class Performance.

"A couple of our blokes at half-time whinged at some of the others in the team which was good as it must come (criticism) from within. We just can't keep throwing points away though.

"We miss 'Fossie' (Brisbane's lethal 32-year-old striker Paul Foster) who has been out (with injury) for four weeks and looks as if he'll be out for another two or three," Kosmina summed up.

NEWCASTLE BREAKERS 2
GIPPSLAND FALCONS 0

By Greg Danvers

The record Breakers were at it again on Friday night when Newcastle, after three draws and loses at home from six encounters with the Falcons, finally got over Gippsland 2-0 at Breakers Stadium in front of 7,024 fans.

The home ground crowd average has grown to 5809 and that includes children through the gate. The Breakers don't fudge their crowds and DO count the kids. A Sydney based journalist would have us believe the youngsters aren't counted.

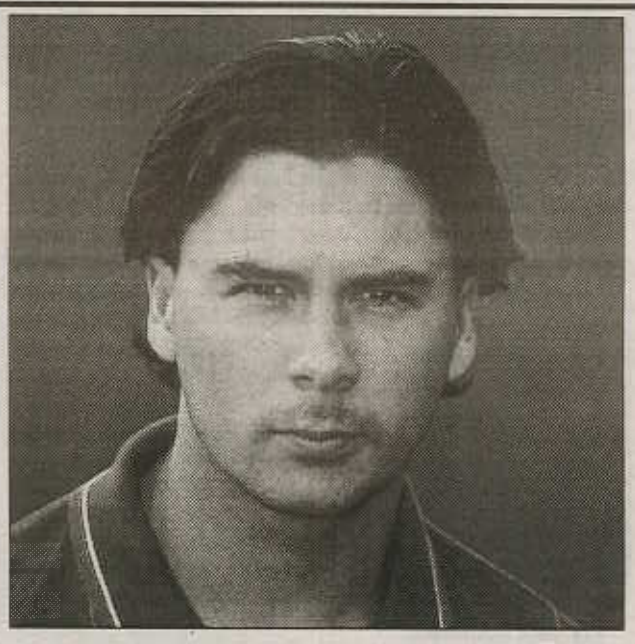
A clean sheet for the 'big man' Bobby Catlin in his 50th match for the Breakers and 307th NSL appearance in agame where he had little work to do.

Andy Roberts headed home a clanger in the 45th minute while Brad Wieczorek, 55th minute, scored the goal of the millennium, or moreover the best ever at Breakers Stadium.

Roberts was on hand on the stroke of half-time to head in the Breakers first goal. Andy Harper found some space on the left and clipped the ball into the area. Roberts, at the far post, got up to the ball and headed it back across goal finding the net at his far post.

Then John 'Jockey' Buonavoglia, 10 minutes into the second stanza, and with only a small window of time and space around him executed an overhead kick through for Wieczorek just inside the box.

On the turn Wieczorek ensured the ball was under-control and then dribbled into a commanding shooting position. A left-foot strike too good for the Falcon's 'keeper Bojo Jevdjevic. The ball took the slightest far post deflection on its way into the net. The crowd ecstatic and the Falcons beaten for the first time at Birmingham Gardens.



Brad Wieczorek: Left-foot screamer.

"There is still a long way to go," Newcastle Breakers coach Lee Sterrey said.

"It's good to get this game over and get another three points.

"I've been worried about this game all week.

"Getting in the top six and achieving 53 points is all we've talked about and that's what we're focused on."

Andy Roberts, described by assistant coach David Lowe as the policeman, scored his second goal of the season and third in a 176 match career.

Roberts normally is given the man-marker role because of his blistering speed and tenacity but on Friday played in an attacking midfield role. With some luck and a bit more finesse in finishing Roberts may have knocked in a couple of goals.

"Gippsland are not an easy team to overcome and we have never beaten them here at Breakers Stadium," a very happy Andy Roberts said after the win.

"The boys went out there to get the three points.

"The score could have blown out a bit if we had've put all our chances away.

"We are playing to our strength's at the moment, we're well drilled at the back and it's just a matter of breaking forward and getting on the end of the ball when they're in the box.

"Lee (Sterrey) is very good at keeping our feet on the ground and we are just going to take it one game at a time and our main focus is a top six finish."

For the Gippsland Falcons coach Jeff Hopkins was a forlorn figure at the Press Conference.

"I thought we started the game pretty well but both goals came from poor tracking by midfield players which was annoying because we had been working on that during the week," he said.

CARLTON SC 1
ADELAIDE CITY 2

By Bert van Bedaf

Adelaide City methodically accounted for a listless Carlton, beating the Blues 2-1 in front of a miserly 1759 crowd at a cavernous Olympic Park last Saturday night.

The Force definitely was with Adelaide, while the Blues put in one of the worst performances of the season, witnessed by its lowest crowd of the season.

Whereas Adelaide will climb a few rungs, Carlton only just hangs on to its sixth spot as the players were booed off the ground. The Blues have won only two of its last 10 matches with the finals threatening to slip out of sight.

Resigning general manager Lou Sticca exploded in the dressing room for about 15 minutes, shouting so loud he could be overheard in the corridor as an almighty row developed. Sticca leaves the club as general manager today (Tuesday) and his farewell rave thundered into history like a bolero on full blast.

Expletives deleted, Sticca ranted, "I'm still the general manager and I'll say what I want to say.

"I'm blaming everyone of you. You guys have a good look at yourselves. I had the guts to quit. I couldn't give anymore, so I quit.

"Some of you guys might want to quit as well. We're a disgrace. We're not even a club."

Director Peter Jess was clearly disturbed as he walked past, saying, "This is not the sort of thing we want," as Sticca's tirade reverberated through the building.

Carlton coach Stuart Munro later commented, "Sometimes it takes somebody else to say what it means to play for this club. How many times I told players things repeatedly is incredible.

Lou Sticca: Blaming everyone.

"The way we've played in the last two matches is shocking. We're huffing and puffing a lot but we're never showing any quality," he said.

Adelaide coach Zoran Matic typically played down the shock win, saying, "It was only a fighting performance."

As to Adelaide's finals chances, Matic said, "There are so many clubs in a better position, it will be very difficult (to make the finals)."

Damian Mori nudged a goal closer to equalling the all-time NSL scoring record with a header in the 15th minute, giving Adelaide a handy lead against a napping Carlton defence.

The Force nearly extended the lead three minutes later, when Matthew Kemp quickly fired back a half-cleared ball which young Daniel Vasilevski blocked.

Mike Conroy, still looking for his first NSL goal, got close in the 20th minute from a David McPherson knock-down, but the English import is yet to find the net for Carlton in a disappointing season.

The Blues struggled to get a grip on Adelaide's fluent passing game, chasing doggedly, but they struck back with a penalty in the 41st minute.

David Terminello, playing against his old club where he never made the seniors, crossed from the right into the Force box.

Conroy dummied and Stuart Slater, challenging for the ball, was brought down by South Korean international defender Dong Ki Kim.

New Zealander Mark Atkinson stepped up in the absence of suspended captain Andrew Marth and blasted his spot kick in the left corner to equalise for the Blues.

Hungry to equal former Brisbane Strikers forward Rod Brown's all-time record of 137 goals, Mori set off on a solo run four minutes into the second half but aimed well wide of the target with a long-range shot and 10 minutes later Nathan Day almost lobbed Carlton 'keeper Dean Anastasiadis, who just managed to save.

Adelaide went ahead for a second time in the 70th minute after Douglas held substitute Brad Hassell (on for Nathan Day) just outside the box. Mori stepped over the ball and peeled off to the right, allowing Aurelio Vidmar to drill it across the ground past the wall into the left corner for the winner, which prompted Sticca's volcanic outburst.

NATIONAL SOCCER LEAGUE

WOLLONGONG WOLVES 3
AUCKLAND KINGZ 1

By Otto Bader

The match at Brandon Park was sensationally marred by a first minute send-off after a foul on Wollongong's Dino Mennillo by Kingz Levent Osman.

From there on it was always a struggle for the visitors to survive with 10 players. Wolves coach Nick Theodorakopoulos surprised with some shock selections, bringing on youngster Paul O'Grady and leaving in form striker Saso Petrovski on the bench with David Huxley and Ben Blake, while captain Matt Horsley was out suspended.

The home team had obviously more possession with the reduced Kingz trying hard to hold them out.

The first corner took until the 12th minute and from there on the Wolves constantly bombarded the visitors goal. Scott Chipperfield looked dangerous attacking the last defender and could have scored in the 23rd minute, intercepting a back pass.

In earlier play Chipperfield went close after penetrating the area just wide. Chances came thick and fast with the Kingz keeper Jason Batty very busy.

The Kingz launched a few attacks and really did not trouble the Wolves keeper much, only when his front defender were ball watching and allowed the visitors too much space. Chipperfield again crossed the ball dangerous close along the Kingz goal line with nobody ready to tap the ball into the net.

Various opportunities were wasted by the home side. Against the run of play the Kingz went ahead when they were awarded a penalty in the 38th minute when a Wolves defender held the Kiwi striker back.

Harry Ngata converted the spot kick, no chance for keeper Les Pogliacomi in the Wolves goal who was outstanding on the night. It did not take long for the Wolves to equalise when striker Stuart Young hit the ball past the keeper in the 45th minute after receiving a pinpoint ball beating defender and keeper.

The second half saw a change for Wollongong when David Huxley came out for youngster Paul O'Grady. The youngster did well according to the coach and is still learning.

Huxley with his experience made a difference and the team looked more balanced.

In the 49th minute Esala Masi made it 2-1 for the Wolves after a free-kick by Dino Mennillo reached him in the box. Shortly after Stuart Young hit the ball over the bar from a good position.

The third goal came in the 56th minute when Stuart Young latched onto a cross from Masi.

The Wolves really should have scored more goals, wasting many chances. Between striker Saso Petrovski and Esala Masi a number of simple chances went begging.

Masi had to come off injured toward the end with a hamstring injury which could put him out for some weeks. The Wolves substituted Ben Blake for Masi, Saso Petrovski for Paul Reid and David Huxley for Paul O'Grady while the Kingz changed Aaron Silva for Bartram Suri, David Moya for Chris Jackson with Wynton Rufer staying on the bench.

Scott Chipperfield: Constant menace to the Kingz.

Afterwards Kingz assistant coach Shane Rufer praised his depleted team for effort and commitment, admitting it was always difficult to play nearly a whole match with 10 men against one of the best sides in the league, saying overall he was happy with the players and they will learn from such games.

Nick Theodorakopoulos felt a lack of enthusiasm from the crowd compared with the last home game atmosphere.

PERTH GLORY 3
CANBERRA COSMOS 2

By Richard Kreider

Perth Glory's fortnight of turmoil came to an extraordinary climax at Perth Oval last Sunday when Chairman Nick Tana reversed his decision to dump coach Bernd Stange at the end of this season and has offered him a 12 month extension to his contract.

The sensational news was broadcast live by Tana himself to the boisterous 13,158 crowd just minutes before the Perth club took on and defeated Canberra Cosmos.

The scenes that followed, when Stange walked out onto the pitch during the pre-match warm-up, bordered on the hysterical, where a standing ovation and tumultuous cheers reverberated all around the ground.

There was even a throng of media cameras, including a crew from Germany, that followed and recorded his every move.

"I was deeply touched by the response I received today," said Stange. The news itself came like a bolt out of the blue with Stange only told of the decision not long before the PA announcement.

"I think Mr Tana showed a great deal of courage in what he did today," said Stange.

"It takes something special to admit your errors, but I will be taking a little time in discussing my future, which of course will be done with my family," he said.

Meanwhile, the hot conditions once again played a significant part in the afternoon's fixture where Glory played quality football in the opening-half only to wilt and almost capitulate to a fast improving Cosmos unit in the second.

Glory kicked-off away from the Hill end and took just two minutes to find the back of the net when Troy Halpin split the Cosmos rearguard with a pin-point ball to Alistair Edwards, who responded by guiding the ball past Grant Barlow.

Edwards then made it 2-0 after half-an-hour's play following another one-on-one with Barlow, but this time there was more than a suspicion of off-side when he received the through-ball.

Canberra pulled one back three minutes later when a clumsy challenge from Scott Miller on Ivo de Jesus presented them with a penalty. De Jesus himself made no mistake with the spot-kick, guiding it past Jason Petkovic's left hand.

Bernd Stange: Contract re-newed.

In the 41st minute, Glory's strong defender Hamilton Thorp was replaced by Jamie Harnwell because of an ankle knock. Harnwell went on to play a solid match after missing the previous two games through suspension.

Perth restored their two-goal buffer three minutes into first-half stoppage time when Halpin and Kasey Wehrman combined to set-up Con Boutsianis to score with a low diving header from eight metres out.

The second-half was only seven minutes old when a quickly-taken free-kick gave Harry James a strong scoring opportunity, but composure was absent as he blasted his strike well wide of the mark.

With the heat now slowing both sides to almost a crawl, Cosmos managed to pull another goal back after 75 minutes when a clash of players involving Petkovic, and substitute Gabriel Gonzalez presented the Canberra side with a second albeit soft penalty decision.

De Jesus cooly sent the spot-kick in the exact same place as his first. Referee Matthew Breeze in fact put the wind up the home side on a number of occasions after some debatable conclusions.

However, as is often the case, it can balance out at the end of the day, since Edwards' second conversion was clearly scored from an offside position and of the eight yellow cards handed out, five were shown to Cosmos players.

"The Jeckyll & Hyde approach we sometimes have was evident again today," said Cosmos coach Tom Sermanni.

"Our second-half performance was much better than the first where we allowed Perth to dominate the game."

It is only the Cosmos' second loss in their last seven outings. Despite conceding three goals, the Canberra defence gave a strong performance under the influence of their no-nonsense skipper Danny Burt who joined Robbie Hooker in wearing red bandanas to protect themselves from the sun.

It is this improvement in their back-third, together with an inform Ivo de Jesus that can present the Cosmos side a good chance of climbing away from the lower reaches of the league ladder.

SOUTH MELBOURNE 1
MARCONI STALLIONS 2

By Bert van Bedaf

An own goal has put a finals place for South Melbourne just about out of reach. Much will depend on the next couple of rounds, Wednesday at home against Carlton and Sunday away to the Melbourne Knights, who will field former England international Peter Beardsley.

Marconi Stallions are looking good and seem poised to secure a finals berth after beating the back-to-back champion 2-1 at Bob Jane stadium last Sunday night.

The Stallions set the tone. They withstood an early South onslaught before hitting the lead through Christian Care. South levelled after Stallions 'keeper David Aceski blundered badly. But Aceski, who was standing in for regular 'keeper Michael Turnbull who is in Italy, recovered and also made some fine saves.

An own goal by Vaughan Coveny gave Marconi victory.

"I think we played very well today," Marconi coach Eddie Krncevic said afterwards. "We're starting to play some good football and we've been undefeated now in the last seven weeks.

"The boys worked hard today. They know how hard it is to come to Bob Jane and get a result here," he said.

Although Marconi shot into the top six, Krncevic is guarded about finals football, saying, "I still think South Melbourne can come in and Carlton can drop out," Krncevic, who coached Carlton for two seasons, said.

In contrast, Ange Postecoglou came close to conceding a finals place for South Melbourne is appearing remote.

"We've got to face the fact we're not playing well. We're going through a bad patch and we'll have to work our way out of it. Things aren't going for us as they did the last few years. We're not as unbeatable as we once were. At this stage we've got to put our sleeves up and keep persevering," Postecoglou summed up a difficult season.

"I thought we created enough opportunities today and the game was on a knife edge, but they (Marconi) had a couple of chances and defended well and got the points. We've had a good run over the last three years and you can't always be on top," he said.

A dozen corners and a handful of chances gave South Melbourne no joy in a frustrating first half.

Coveny, Goran Lozanovski, captain Paul Trimboli and Michael Curcija stumbled at the final hurdle as South piled on the pressure only to fall behind after 26 minutes.

Vlado Zoric stole the ball from Steve Iosifidis and crossed to substitute Care (on for Darren McDonald after 17 minutes), who put Marconi a goal up with a low drive from 25 metres that left South 'keeper Chris Jones at full stretch and beaten in his wake.

In the previous 25 minutes, South Melbourne had done everything possible to force an opening goal. Curcija crossed for Coveny, who did not connect with the ball and saw it being pushed for a corner.

Lozanovski let go with something that was neither a cross nor a shot but did prove easy pickings for Aceski. Trimboli attempted a diving header from close range but could not get the ball in the net. Curcija had a shot blocked and Trimboli worked the rebound over the bar.

But Aceski's mistake in the 54th minute brought South back into the contest. Steve Panopoulos crossed the ball into the box. The Marconi 'keeper went for the ball but let it slip through his hands and fall behind him, where Michael Curcija enjoyed an easy tap-in into an open goal.

Christian Care: Long-range effort.

Curcija could have scored again five minutes later. Taking on two defenders, he worked his way into the box but fired his shot well above the crossbar and he also came agonisingly close in the 72nd minute from a Coveny cutback.

Marconi regained the lead when Coveny struck an own goal in the 78th minute. Chad Gibson had forced Chris Jones into a reflex save, who pushed the ball for a corner. Brad Maloney whipped in the cross towards Dominic Longo. Coveny denied Longo his header but nodded the ball into his own net instead to worsen South's mounting woes.

TURN TO PAGE 32 FOR MATCH STATISTICS

NATIONAL SOCCER LEAGUE

SYDNEY UNITED 1
MELBOURNE KIGHTS 2

By Daniel Giorelando

The Melbourne Knights continued their remarkable unbeaten streak over the past two months after defeating Sydney United 2-1 at Edensor Park last Sunday night.

For a team who sits in the bottom four of the league, their current run of eight games without defeat including three wins and five draws, puts the once glamour side of the 90s just six points outside the top six.

Their latest win over the hapless Sydney United was dually deserved by the Knights who dominated possession and territory throughout the match, even after the dismissal of defender Rody Vargas in the 62nd minute.

Following a first half which many described as one of the worst halves of football seen in the NSL, the Knights woke from the boredom of the first 45 minutes to take the game by the scruff of the neck, taking the lead only seven minutes after the break through Michael Reda.

After a first half a few chances, the best coming six minutes from the break as Alex Kiratzoglou missed a header from inside the six-yard box, Reda took it upon himself to spark his team, and that he did.

Reda threw caution to the wind by unleashing a thunderous 20-yard drive, which seemingly took a deflection off a United defender, a touch which left United keeper Steve Tolios with no chance.

The goal sparked new life and confidence into the Knights who came close to doubling the lead eight minutes later through Kelic, who saw his 20-yard drive deflected wide of the posts.

But just when it looked as though the Knights were running away with the three points, United were given a glimmer of hope by referee Brett Hugo who had no hesitation in giving Rody Vargas his marching orders in the 62nd minute.

To be fair to Hugo, the dismissal was certainly warranted, the challenge halting a certain goalscoring opportunity.

Vargas, after presenting a poor backpass to keeper Martin John, let Bosevski slip between himself and Ante Kovacevic and in desperation, he pulled down Bosevski on the edge of the area, just before he was able to get a shot off.

Michael Reda: Scorer.

From the resulting free kick, United's best on the night, Tom Pondeljak was unlucky not to score as his dipping shot rattled off the bar.

With the numerical advantage, United began to inch back into the game although their charge should have been halted by Ivan Kelic after 66 minutes who squandered a great chance when one on one with United's keeper Tolios, who saved well low to his right.

And 10 minutes later, Knights substitute Paul Urlovic missed an even easier opportunity to seal victory for the visitors as he was first to pounce on a poor defensive error by Greg Saric.

But once again Tolios came to the rescue of United, diving low at the feet of Urlovic who was attempting to dribble around the keeper instead of taking a first-time shot which may have proved more fruitful.

However, the Knights finally secured all three points in the 85th minute. A cross by Olyroo Dragi Nastevski from the right was cleverly headed back across goal by an unmarked Kelic.

Kelic inturn found an unmarked Urlovic who made no mistake with his header, sending it off the base of the right post and into the back of the net to make it 2-0.

United woke from their slumber and straight from the kickoff, Bosevski unleashed a thunderbolt from just outside the box, which hit the crossbar before crossing the line, pulling the score back to 1-2.

The goal breathed new life into a side which apart from Pondeljak, lacked direction or leadership, but with three minutes left, United almost obtained an unfancied equaliser through Bosevski who could only send a weak shot wide of the right post.

The Knights, who have now gone two months undefeated are back in the race for an unlikely finals berth considering their disastrous start to the season and whilst the season has progressively improved for the Knights, United's miserable run continues, the loss entrenching their position at the bottom of the table.

SYDNEY OLYMPIC 3
NORTHERN SPIRIT 1

By John Economos

Sydney Olympic's fluent, yet furious performance, hugely inspired by the devastating performances from robust midfielder Brett Emerton and lethal striker Pablo Cardozo, lifted them to a 3-1 victory over a rattled and patched up Northern Spirit last Sunday night at the Belmore Sports Ground.

Having now racked up 13 wins plus five draws from their last 23 outings of the season to date, Olympic rapidly growing in confidence has set a cracking pace at the top of the League.

The Spirit simply had no answers to neutralise the attacking venom from Emerton and Cardozo.

Both scored goals and both repeatedly wrecked the Spirit's stability.

Emerton using his powerful body in the 23rd minute, raced onto a magnificent flat through ball from Cardozo to bullock his way into the box and score Olympic's second goal.

Lanky striker Zlatko Arambasic drew first blood for Olympic in the 15th minute as he sliced past marker Paul Bilokapic on the left to let fly into the far corner of the target with a right-footed placed shot.

Just a minute earlier a hasty Arambasic crashed his volleyed shot onto the horizontal whilst his team-mates, sweeper Ante Juric and playmaker Gabriel Mendez, both missed chances in the opening three minutes.

A break in Olympic's onslaught right on the half hour mark, saw Spirit striker Abbas Saad cleverly attempt to lob Olympic's advanced goalie Jimmy Kourtis, but from nowhere the giant figure of Emerton had raced behind to clear the goal-bound missile off the line.

Over the past 10 weeks or so, Emerton, (currently the Australian Olympic Games captain), has consistently delivered a vastly improved level of form for his Club, an excellent omen for the rapidly approaching Olympic Games.

Coupled with Cardozo's camouflaged and uncanny cool silky skills, plus his excellent peripheral vision, the dynamic duo ripped the heart out of the Spirit.

Only over anxious shooting denied Olympic at least another three goals.

Having to face Olympic's fury without six of their star players, (four injured plus another two in dispute with management), the Spirit buckled under the sustained pressure repeatedly launched by the home side.

Spirit's recent Italian import and former World Cup midfielder Nicola Berti, is still hopelessly unfit which compounded the Spirits' tale of woes and it was no wonder that coach Graham Arnold had to 'drag' him in the 54th minute.

Constantly refusing to yield to Olympic's power and pace, was the Spirit's defiant captain Robbie Slater. Eight minutes from the break the slashing Slater was rewarded with a goal after having had two bites of the cherry when Kourtis could only parry Slater's first shot.

With the scoreboard showing Olympic leading only 2-1, Cardozo almost on the hour mark ignited a huge roar from around Belmore Sports Ground with a classic dream goal that stretched and galvanised Olympic's 3-1 lead.

Latching onto a powerful cross fired in from the right by Emerton, Cardozo wizardly turned his defender on the far side before rifling into the target a rising drive that ripped into the roof of the net.

Slater rocked the Olympic cross-bar in the 65th minute whilst Olympic's 80th minute substitute Hussein Jomaa slammed from the left and into the side netting seconds after coming onto the pitch.

Cardozo continued weaving some of his splendid magic especially when surrounded in one instance by no less than four Spirit defenders (see story page 3).

Outstanding for Olympic were Emerton and Cardozo, strongly supported by twin-stoppers Scotty Baillie and Chris Zoricich whilst Slater, Simon Catanzaro, Adam Griffiths and Paul Wearne battled on, refusing to throw in the towel for the Spirit.

A disappointed Spirit coach, Graham Arnold, later confessed: "We were beaten by a much better team that wanted to win more, but I was happy with our three young boys (Griffiths, Cantanzaro and Wearne). The main difference between the two teams was Olympic's class players in Cardozo and Emerton.

"Cardozo's class goal broke our backs, whilst Emerton can play overseas but consistency is most important. Berti (Nicola-Spirit's Italian import), by his own admission is still not fit. Olympic is the best team we've played this season ."

Arnold then regretfully went on to add: "We still have Bingley and Rudan out for another four to five weeks with injuries-but let's not talk about injuries as Olympic were the better team," ended Arnold.

Still leading the League, Olympic's coach Branko Culina reflected: "Emerton was outstanding with his attitude, work rate and enthusiasm superb. Slater (Robbie) showed tonight he is still a class player that caused us trouble. But we were outstanding, yet selfishness cost us more goals whilst playing outstanding football. We still need to work more on our defence," Culina ended.

ABSW PLAYER OF THE YEAR

ROUND 23

Parramatta v Brisbane
3-J. Burns (PP)
2-S. McGaren (BS)
1-P. Grierson (BS)

Carlton v Adelaide City
3-A. Costanzo (AC)
2-A. Vidmar (AC)
1-W. Knezevic (AC)

Perth Glory v Canberra
3-Edgar (PG)
2-I. De Jesus (CC)
1-T. Halpin (PG)

South Melbourne v Marconi
3-C. Care (MS)
2-C. Gibson (MS)
1-A. Vlahos (SM)

Newcastle v Gippsland
3-A. Roberts (NB)
2-B. Wyeczorek (NB)
1-A. Harper (NB)

Wollongong v Auckland
3-R. Stanton (WW)
2-S. CHipperfield (WW)
1-C. Bunce (AK)

Sydney United v Melb Knights
3-M. Reda (MK)
2-T. Pondeljak (SU)
1-N. Bosevski (SU)

Sydney Olympic v Northern Spirit
3-B. Emerton (SO)
2-P. Cardozo (SO)
1-R. Slater (NS)

PROGRESSIVE POINTS
AFTER ROUND 23

David Cervinski	(Wollongong Wolves)	24
Pablo Cardozo	(Sydney Olympic)	24
Andy Harper	(Newcastle Breakers)	23
Angelo Costanzo	(Adelaide City Force)	21
Michael Curcija	(South Melbourne)	18
John Buonavoglia	(Newcastle Breakers)	18
Mehmed Durakovic	(Gippsland Falcons)	16
Con Boutsianis	(Perth Glory)	16
Lubo Lapsansky	(Carlton SC)	15
Andrew Crews	(Parramatta Power)	14
Gabriel Mendez	(Sydney Olympic)	14
Gareth Naven	(Perth Glory)	14
A. Vidmar	(Adelaide City)	13

TURN TO PAGE 32 FOR MATCH STATISTICS

Eat Well Live Well Premier League

eat well live well

DIABETES AUSTRALIA Victoria

VicHealth

★★ ROUND FOUR WRAP ★★

By Bert van Bedaf

It's diffucult getting a grip on proceedings with split rounds, but Green Gully continues to demolish the opposition, while Port Melbourne is taking an early nosedive.

The Sharks showed form by beating Bentleigh in the opening round, but have slumped to three straight losses since.

Heidelberg United recorded its first win and may be on the way up.

Altona East fell to the Bentleigh Greens, while St Albans showed its never-say-die spirit that will make it a threat this season.

With three matches played yesterday, past the paper's deadline, it's impossible to tally the round today, but at this early stage, Green Gully looks like being capable of winning back-to-back titles.

It's a pity that a second division of the national league won't get up next season, although it's on the cards for 2001 (See interview with VSF chairman Manny Galanos on page 7)

It means that a VPL title still won't be a passport to bigger and better things.

Although a worthy aim in itself, the Victorian championship does not (yet) lead to a higher division or offer participation in a higher competition, something which a title victory guarantees clubs in most soccer nations.

GREENS BEAT EAST

By David Davutovic

A penalty miss and a red card in the first-half was enough to see Altona East's three-match unbeaten run come to an abrupt halt as they crashed to a 3-0 defeat away to Bentleigh Greens.

The game sprung to life after 25 minutes, when the visitors were awarded a penalty after Greens defender Theo Constantinou was adjudged to have handled inside his own area.

But Nick Papadopoulos' weak penalty was palmed away by Bentleigh 'keeper Glenn Clarke.

Greens midfielder Doug Mladenovic, making his first senior appearance of the season after an ankle injury, blasted the Greens into the lead after 30 minutes with a 25-metre free kick that sailed into the top left corner.

A Bentleigh counter-attack in the 43rd minute resulted in the sending off of Altona substitute Bill Armour, who was on the field for only 20 minutes. A Harry Micheil's through-ball released Drew Laurence who was hacked by Armour as he approached the penalty area.

Five minutes into the second half Mladenovic scored his second goal. He stabbed the ball home from close range after David Breslin and Laurence combined to set it up.

Mladenovic nearly netted a hat-trick 10 minutes later as his long-range effort went narrowly over the crossbar.

Substitute Saso Markovski put the icing on the cake in the 90th minute, planting the ball in the net for a morale boosting 3-0 victory.

Argentine Diego Gavazzi was a mere spectator on the Greens bench as coach Harry Chalkitis used his maximum of three substitutes.

Regulars such as Saso Markovski and George Kalimeris were also relegated to the bench as Chalkitis admitted, "We haven't set the world on fire in the last three matches and changes were needed to let the players know that's not acceptable.

"We have so far struggled to replace the likes of Juan Nilo (to Gippsland Falcons), John Papettas who underwent a knee-reconstruction last week, and Cameron Pino who is set to sign a contract in Uruguay after a successful trial," Chalkitis said.

"A three goal margin didn't reflect the way we played", said Altona's team manager Leo Korosidis. "I think the boy (Armour) was a bit stiff to get red, it probably deserved a yellow and it could've been a different ball game," he said.

SAINTS SNARE SHARKS

By Ivan Perkov

An exciting game in prospect turned into a seven-goal thriller, with St Albans prevailing 4-3 over Port Melbourne.

It was an inspirational second half performance by St Albans and particularly by Ivan Razov, who scored twice, including the winner, that earned the Saints maximum points.

As early as the fourth minute, St Albans denied Port with a goal-bound clearance, while Port 'keeper Chris Roche came to the Sharks' rescue a minute later.

But complacency got the better of Roche in the 36th minute as he dwelled on a back pass, allowing Ivan Zilic to challenge and give the Saints the lead.

The Saints lapsed early in the second half, allowing Port to equalise in the 51st minute. A lobbed free-kick had Damon Collina capitalise with a tap-in after the ball had been knocked across goal.

Five minutes later, Port went a goal up. A long throw found Nick Tsaltas, who flicked the ball on for Sam Poutakidis to slam it home.

The Sharks seemed to take control, but the determined Saints managed to equalise. Damien Vojtek released substitute Mijo Trupkovic. His low cross was met by an unlucky Tom Sonsini, who tapped the ball past Roche for an own goal.

But the Sharks showed their resilience. In the 71st minute, George Tzirtis released a powerful shot that sizzled past a hapless Saints 'keeper Marijan Vunderl for 3-2.

Yet, the Saints staged a stunning comeback. After Port Melbourne did not clear from a corner, a miss-kick allowed Razov to stab home the equaliser.

DUBIOUS GOAL DOWNS MAGIC

By John Rigas

A controversial goal had Altona Magic officials, players and supporters up in arms as Green Gully beat the former triple champion 3-0 at Paisley Park last Saturday night.

The Cavaliers maintained their 100 per cent record with an impressive fourth victory, looking far more superior, and penetrating Altona Magic's defence time and again.

Referee Hakan Anaz awarded Green Gully a penalty in the 27th minute when Altona 'keeper Darren McGrath fouled Gully marksman Sash Becvinovski.

Zdravko Atanasovski converted from the spot with a powerful strike in the left corner.

Two minutes later Anaz covered himself in controversy when he awarded a goal to Gully after Becvinovski took a shot, which appeared not to clear the goal line. The assistant referee waved his flag and Anaz went to speak with him and awarded the goal, which appeared on the official results release as an own goal.

Altona players swarmed Anaz like bees, protesting the decision, while an angry president Tony Todorovski said, "This is the worst refereeing I've seen. These people wreck the game in Australia."

Gully began the second half two goals up and were looking hungry for more.

In the 63rd minute, a build-up involving substitutes Tony Neceski and Ice Kutlesovski helped set up Becvinovski, whose shot was cleared off the line by Johnny Cvetanovski.

Cavalier defender George Georgiadis supplied a through-ball for Kutlesovski, whose delicate shot went centimetres wide.

Five minutes from full time Kutlesovski found the net, heading past McGrath after the former Melbourne Knights forward was set up by Neceski and Becvinovski.

Victorian Soccer Federation *Eat Well Live Well*

PREMIER LEAGUE 2000

Saturday 26 February 2000

Altona Magic .....0 Green Gully Cavaliers .3
(Zdravko Atanasovski, Ice Kutlesovski, own goal)

Sunday 27 February 2000

Bentleigh Greens ..3 Altona East Phoenix ...0
(Doug Mladenovic 2, Saso Markovski)

St Albans Saints ...4 Port Melbourne Sharks 3
(Ivan Tazov 2, Ivan Zilic, og) (Sam Poutakidis, Nick Tsaltas, George Tzirtis)

Monday 28 February 2000

Bulleen Zebras v Preston Lions
(6.15/8.15 pm, Veneto Club)

Heidelberg United v Fawkner Blues
(6.15/8.15 pm, Jack Edwards Reserve)

Melbourne Raiders v Oakleigh Cannons
(6.15/8.15 pm, Epping Soccer Stadium)

Reserves

Saturday 26 February 2000

Altona Magic .....1 Green Gully Cavaliers .4

Sunday 27 February 2000

Bentleigh Greens ..4 Altona East Phoenix ...0
St Albans Saints ...1 Port Melbourne Sharks 1

Monday 28 February 2000

Bulleen Zebras v Preston Lions
Heidelberg United v Fawkner Blues

Melbourne Raiders v Oakleigh Cannons

LEAGUE LADDER

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Green Gully Cavaliers	4	4	0	0	12	2	12
Altona East Phoenix	4	3	0	1	5	5	9
St Albans Saints	4	2	1	1	10	7	7
Bentleigh Greens	4	2	0	2	6	3	6
Altona Magic	4	1	2	1	5	7	5
Preston Lions	3	1	1	1	3	3	4
Oakleigh Cannons	3	1	1	1	4	5	4
Bulleen Zebras	3	1	0	2	4	6	3
Fawkner Blues	3	1	0	2	3	5	3
Heidelberg United	3	1	0	2	6	9	3
Port Melbourne Sharks	4	1	0	3	7	11	3
Melbourne Raiders	3	0	1	2	3	5	1

Round 5

Friday 3 March 2000

Port Melbourne Sharks v Altona Magic

Sunday 5 March 2000

Green Gully Cavaliers v Oakleigh Cannons
Fawkner Blues v St Albans Saints
Preston Lions v Heidelberg United
Altona East Phoenix v Bulleen Zebras
Bentleigh Greens v Melbourne Raiders

NSW SUPER LEAGUE

— ROUND 8 —

BERRIES THRASHED

Blacktown City 7
Canterbury 0

By Don O'Regan

Four goals in the first half for the Blacktown City Demons followed by three in the second period were a fair measure of the difference in class between them and the Canterbury Marrickville Berries at the Gabbie Stadium last Saturday evening.

Missing the quality quartet of Percy, Mendes, Raeburn and Fedele, the Berries had no answer to the rampaging Demons who outperformed them in every area of the park except perhaps between their sticks where there was very little activity.

City goalkeeper Fernando Greco celebrated his 100th first grade appearance by keeping a clean sheet although, with only one shot of any note against him, it would have been one of the easiest win bonuses he has earned since joining Blacktown in 1977.

As you would expect from such a one-sided contest, Greco's counterpart at the other end of the field, Frank Mikuletic, was called upon to display his talents on a lot more occasions. He had no answer to the Demons' highly experienced forward Jason Bennett in the ninth minute when Bennett coolly chipped the ball over his head for the opening goal.

Eighteen minutes later and the Demons doubled their advantage, this time through the youthful Mark Hagger.

In the 29th minute the contest seemed all but over when Chris Bradley slammed home Peter Sermanni's through ball to give City a three-goal lead. Another Blacktown strike in the 35th minute from the head of defender Paul Yates sent John Xipolitas' Berries into the break four goals behind and with a mountain to climb.

It was not to be when, barely two minutes after the restart the Demons notched their fifth. Damon Langan sent over a speculative centre into the area and Naoki Imaya was the quickest to react heading home his second goal of the season.

Mark Hagger helped himself to his second of the game and sixth of the season when he fired home his angled shot in the 77th minute and Adam Kwasnik completed the rout in the 83th minute with another header after a clever build-up involving Hagger and Riches.

SCORERS

Central Coast Coasties 0, Macarthur Rams 2 (C Bishop 35m, R Lloyd 67m)

Blacktown City Demons 7 (J Bennett 9m, M Hagger 27/77m, C Bradley 29m, P Yates 35m, N Imaya 47m, A Kwasnik 83m), **Canterbury Marrickville Berries 0**

Penrith Panthers 2 (B Casserly 43m Pen, K Davies 88m), **Eastern Suburbs Wanderers 1** (J Aschner 85m)

Bankstown City Lions 1 (M Lemazina 49m), **Manly Warringah Dolphins 2** (M Beldham 15m, D Webb 35m)

Fairfield Bulls 0, St George Saints 1 (E Augerinos 47m)

Sutherland Sharks 1 (S Allison 96m), **Bonnyrigg White Eagles 3** (J Ghisso 5/93m, M Hawrysiuk 62m)

Parramatta Eagles 3 (A Anderson 12m, N Joseski 77m Pen/82m), **Leichhardt Tigers 0**

RESULTS

	1st	U/21	U/18
Fairfield v St George	0-1	0-3	6-1
Sutherland v Bonnyrigg	1-3	2-2	0-1
Cen. Coast v Macarthur	0-2	2-2	5-2
Blacktown v Cant-Marr.	7-0	3-1	4-1
Parramatta v Leichhardt	3-0	1-2	5-2
Penrith v Eastern Subs	2-1	5-3	4-0
Bankstown v Manly-Warr.	1-2	4-4	3-1

DOLPHINS IN UPSET

Bankstown City 1
Manly Warringah 2

By Julian Murphy

Manly Warringah survived a second half onslaught to record an upset 2-1 victory at Bankstown on Saturday.

The Dolphins gritty performance, in hot conditions, showed how there are no easy games in this year's competition.

Both sides played well in the opening stages with Bankstown perhaps looking a little more threatening. In the 15th minute, however, Manly almost took the lead. A Keith Long free kick passed through a croweded but motionless penalty box to an unmarked Jeremy Pettenon. Luckily for the Lions, Pettenon's shot hit the side netting.

Ten minutes later the Bankstown defence were caught out again but this time it was more costly. Mite Talcevski, a recent arrival from Leichhardt, took a corner that the Lions failed to clear. In the ensuing scramble Zlatko Jeseski made one good save but Manly striker Mark Beldham was on hand to squeeze the rebound past the keeper.

Bankstown pressed for an equaliser through the likes of George Issa and Tony Joseski but Manly were definitely matching their more highly fancied opponents. The Dolphins defence was stubborn and Dean and Shane Webb, playing park football not long ago, were running their hearts out up each flank. When Dean Webb lashed a shot into the top left corner in the 38th minute, an upset was on the cards.

The home side came out in the second half with more purpose and within three minutes of the restart it was 2-1. George Issa, the source of many Bankstown attacks, crossed from the left for Michael Lemezina to volley into the roof of the net.

After the goal Bankstown piled forward and seemed likely to overrun the Dolphins yet, amazingly, the equaliser never came. Manly keeper Dean McCreath had an exceptional game making several key saves.

The last 15 minutes were played in fading light and Manly had opportunities to seal the win through Beldham and Robert Smithies. In the end Manly hung on to record their second win of the season and inflict on Bankstown their first home defeat.

The Dolphins commitment impressed coach Tony Pezzano and he said as much after the game.

"We played well in the first half and stuck it out in the second. We could have snatched a third goal at the end. We just want to make it hard for other sides and play some good footy and tonight I think we did that."

TIGERS MAULED

Parramatta Eagles 3
Leichhardt Tigers 0

by Joe Russo

It was dramatic and at times controversial game in which three players were sent off.

Parramatta Eagles opened the scoring in the 11th minute when a wonderful cross by Mittiga found an unmarked Anderson in the area, who calmly headed in.

In the space of three minutes both teams were down to 10 men. Talcevski in the 52nd and Meilak in the 55th, were both sent off for their second bookable offences.

The 72nd minute was the most controversial. Dowling saved a shot from Joseski on his own line but the referee's assistant, signalled for a handball. No Parramatta players protested, yet Dowling was sent off and Parramatta given the penalty. It was taken by Joseski, the 'keeper parried it, but Joseski re-gathered and headed home the ball.

Parramatta Eagles further extended their lead in the 76th minute. Once again it was Joseski, who with a delightful chip-kick from 25 metres, caught out 'keeper Woods well off his line.

TOP SCORERS
AFTER ROUND 8

PLAYER	CLUB	GOALS
J. Ghisso	Bonnyrigg	8
S. Karavatakis	Leichhardt	7
M. Hagger	Blacktown	6
N. Joseski	Parramatta	6
J. Aschner	Eastern Subs	5
J. Bakis	St George	5

TABLE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	PTS
Blacktown City Demons	8	5	1	2	25	7	18	16
St George Saints	8	5	1	2	15	8	7	16
Leichhardt Tigers	8	5	1	2	19	14	5	16
Bonnyrigg White Eagles	8	5	0	3	22	16	6	15
Central Coast Coasties	8	4	2	2	15	10	5	14
Parramatta Eagles	8	3	3	2	18	13	5	12
Bankstown City Lions	8	3	3	2	12	9	3	12
Canterbury Marrickville	8	4	0	4	14	22	-8	12
Macarthur Rams	8	2	3	3	12	12	0	9
Manly Warringah Dolphins	8	2	3	3	11	13	-2	9
Fairfield Bulls	8	2	2	4	10	13	-3	8
Penrith Panthers	8	2	1	5	7	22	-15	7
Eastern Suburbs	8	2	0	6	9	15	-6	6
Sutherland Sharks	8	2	0	6	10	25	-15	6

NSW SOCCER FEDERATION

Super League

Kick-off times – 5.00pm (1st Grade), 3.00pm (U21s), 1.00pm (U18s) unless otherwise stated

Saturday 4 March 2000

Bonnyrigg v Fairfield
Serbian Centre
3pm (U18s), 5pm (U21s), 7pm (1st Grade)

Macarthur v Sutherland
Lynwood Park
3pm (U18s), 5pm (U21s), 7pm (1st Grade)

Sunday 5 March 2000

St George v Easts
St George Stadium

Cant Marr. v Central Coast
Henson Park

Parramatta Eagles v Blacktown
Melita Stadium

Penrith v Bankstown
Andrews Road Field

Leichhardt Tigers v Manly
Lambert Park

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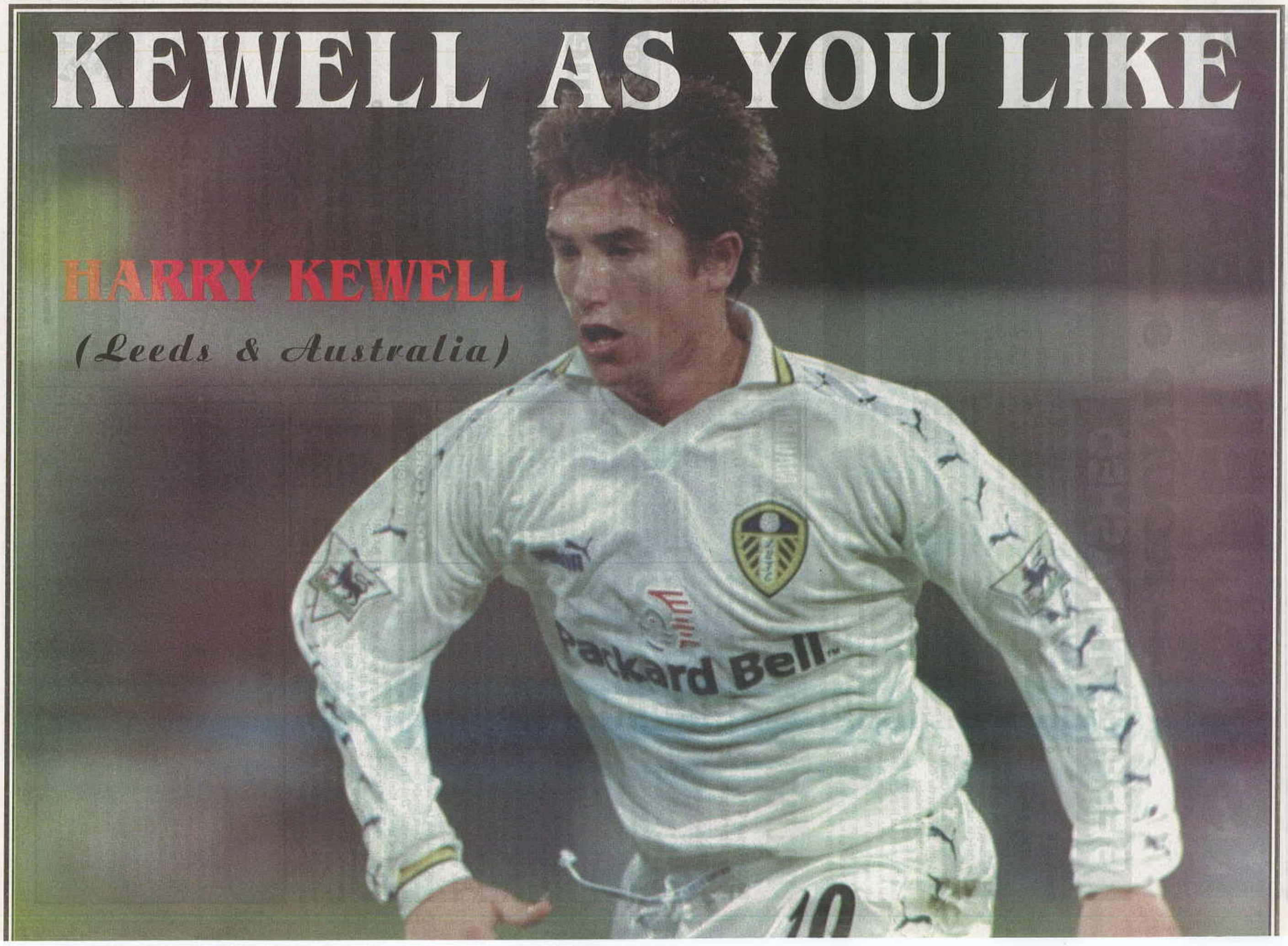

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National Youth League 1999/2000

NORTHERN DIVISION (ROUND 23)

FRIDAY 25 FEBRUARY 2000

Newcastle Breakers .....4 ...**A.I.S.** 3
(Ferguson 28, Tomich 53, 67, Juchniewicz 76) (Tsiorlas 1, 86, Johnson 21)

Parramatta Power .....1 ...**Q.A.S.** 1
(Cabrera 87) (Dreger 57)

SUNDAY 27 FEBRUARY 2000 (Rd 16)

A.I.S. .....3 ...**Q.A.S.** 2
(Pace 53, Tsiorlas 65, Parisi 90) (Miner 8, 85)

SUNDAY 27 FEBRUARY 2000

Wollongong Wolves Colts ..0 ...**A.C.T.A.S.** 3
(Williams 14, 59, Ivanic 89)

Sydney United .....2 ...**Sydney Olympic Academy** 0
(Ralevski 49, Lo Proto 87)

Marconi Stallions Colts ....3 ...**Sydney United Colts** 0
(Awaritefe 2, Sandoval 11, Brosque 56)

Sydney Olympic .....1 ...**Northern Spirit** 4
(Miot 60) (R Griffiths 37, Snyder 55, 66, Faria 86)

N.S.W.I.S .....2 ...**Northern Spirit Colts** 2
(Carney 68, Holman 89 pen) (Saginian 3, Arrarte 7)

Newcastle Breakers Colts v Marconi Stallions (deferred)
Bye - Wollongong Wolves

	P	W	D	B	L	F	A	Pts
Parramatta Power	**22**	**16**	**4**	**1**	**2**	**62**	**17**	**52**
Northern Spirit	21	15	3	1	3	66	25	48
Sydney Olympic	21	13	3	2	5	57	30	42
Newcastle Breakers	21	13	1	1	6	41	25	40
A.I.S.	21	12	2	1	7	65	31	38
Q.A.S.	21	12	2	2	7	56	34	38
Marconi Stallions	18	12	0	1	6	50	24	36
Wollongong Wolves	21	10	2	1	9	31	32	32
Sydney United	19	10	1	1	8	31	36	31
A.C.T.A.S.	21	8	6	2	7	33	40	30
Newcastle Breakers Colts	22	8	2	1	12	34	43	26
Sydney Olympic Academy	21	8	1	2	12	40	67	25
N.S.W.I.S.	20	5	4	2	11	33	36	19
Marconi Stallions Colts	22	5	4	1	13	34	61	19
Northern Spirit Colts	22	4	4	1	14	23	54	16
Sydney United Colts	20	3	3	2	14	22	49	12
Wollongong Wolves Colts	19	0	2	1	17	9	83	2

ROUND 23

A double from Luke Tomich and singles to Joshua Ferguson and Peter Juchniewicz lifted the Newcastle Breakers into the top four for the first time this season. The 4-3 win over reigning champions the A.I.S. sees the Breakers in fourth place on the league ladder.

The A.I.S. led after a goal within 60 seconds to Mark Tsiorlas and doubled their lead in the 21st minute via Mitchell Johnson. However, the Breakers fought back brilliantly and scored four successive goals to ensure another home victory. Tsiorlas added his second four minutes from time but time ran out for the visitors.

The Parramatta Power were fortunate to escape with a point when they hosted the Q.A.S. on Friday night. After a scoreless first stanza, the visitors took the advantage with a 57th minute strike form Daniel Dreger.

The hosts seemed to be in trouble but were saved by substitute Daniel Cabrera. Cabrera was introduced into the game with a quarter of an hour to go and scored the equaliser in the 87th minute.

In a match deferred from Round 16, the A.I.S. defeated the Q.A.S. at the A.I.S. Soccer Field. The 3-2 result sees the A.I.S. jump into fifth spot ahead of their opponents, courtesy of a superior goal difference.

The visitors took the lead after eight minutes and led at the break. The hosts rallied and Steven Pace scored after 53 minutes before Mark Tsiorlas gave the Institute a 2-1 advantage. Russell Miner scored his second after 85 minutes to level the scores but a last minute strike from Franco Parisi stole the points for the desperate hosts.

The A.C.T.A.S. overcame a spirited Wollongong Wolves Colts outfit to record an impressive 3-0 away win. The match was sealed in the 89th minute when substitute Paul Ivanic found the back of the net.

The visitors took a 1-0 half-time lead and doubled that lead after 59 minutes with Adam Williams netting both goals for the boys from Canberra.

Sydney United scored twice in the second half to record a 2-0 win over the Sydney Olympic Academy at the Sydney United Sports Centre. The score was nil-all at half-time.

Steven Ralevski broke the deadlock five minute into the second period before Allan Lo Proto netted his 10th goal this season to seal the result.

Francis Awaritefe struck after two minutes and Rod Sandoval increased the lead after 11 minutes as the Marconi Stallions Colts took a 2-0 lead against the Sydney United Colts. Alex Brosque scored in the 56th minute for the Stallions to end the scoring. The Stallions used the services of regular first graders Awaritefe, Brendan Renaud and Pan-Keun Kim to lift their team to a 3-0 result.

The Northern Spirit thumped Sydney Olympic by four goals to one at the Belmore Sports Ground to secure second spot in the league. Olympic played well below their best and the Spirit took full advantage.

Ryan Griffiths scored his 14th goal to give the Spirit the lead at the break. Adam Snyder doubled the lead after 55 minutes before Lee Miot reduced the lead five minutes later. The Spirit then killed off Olympic's fight-back when Snyder struck again in the 66th minute. Antonio Faria sealed the result with his team's fourth goal in the 86th minute.

The Northern Spirit Colts took a 2-0 lead within seven minutes but fell at the final hurdle in their attempt to defeat the N.S.W.I.S. at Valentine Park. Artin Saginian and Ismael Arrarte scored for the Spirit before a second-half assault from the hosts turned the game on its head.

The hosts reduced the deficit on 68 minutes courtesy of a David Carney goal and continued to pour on the pressure searching for an equaliser. It seemed as though the visitors would hold on but the introduction of 14 year old Nick Stavroulakis to the fray with five minutes to go was inspired.

Stavroulakis won his side a last minute penalty which Brett Holman converted. The late strike gave the N.S.W.I.S. an unlikely 2-2 draw.

The Newcastle Breakers Colts and Marconi Stallions clash will be deferred to a later date due to the Stallions involvement in the Viareggio Youth Soccer Tournament in Italy.

ROUND 24

SATURDAY 4 MARCH 2000

Sydney United Colts v Sydney United
(Sydney United Sports Centre - 4.00pm)
Northern Spirit v Wollongong Wolves (Christie Park - 4.30pm)
Q.A.S. v Wollongong Wolves Colts
(Suncorp Metway Stadium - 4.45pm)
Northern Spirit Colts v Sydney Olympic (Christie Park - 6.30pm)
A.I.S. v N.S.W.I.S. (A.I.S. Soccer Field - 7.00pm)

SUNDAY 5 MARCH 2000

Sydney Olympic Academy v Newcastle Breakers Colts
(Wentworth Park - 4.00pm)

TUESDAY 7 MARCH 2000

A.C.T.A.S. v Marconi Stallions Colts (Bruce Stadium - 5.00pm)
Marconi Stallions v Newcastle Breakers (Match deferred)

LEADING SCORERS

Russell Miner	**Q.A.S.**	**16**
Ryan Griffiths	Northern Spirit	14
Daniel Severino	Marconi Stallions	13
Elias Demourtzidis	A.I.S.	11
Kevo Gulesserian	Marconi Stallions (A.I.S.)	10
Daniel Kukucka	Parramatta Power	10
Allan Lo Proto	Sydney United	10

SOUTHERN DIVISION (ROUND 14)

FRIDAY 25 FEBRUARY 2000

Melb Knights Academy ....1 ...**Melbourne Knights** 2
(Michael Vonja) (Marjn Kolceg, Jasmin Sehic)

SATURDAY 26 FEBRUARY 2000

Preston Lions .....1 ...**Gippsland Falcons** 6
(Zoran Alexovski) (Peter Kakos 3, Tony Pardo 2, Ben Cassar)

Carlton .....1 ...**Bulleen Inter** 1
(Dusko Delic) (Xhezair Sulemani)

SUNDAY 27 FEBRUARY 2000

South Dandenong .....1 ...**VIS** 3
(Christian Barra) (David Terek 2, Evan Papadopoulos)

South Melbourne v Fawkner Blues (postponed)
Albury Wodonga – Bye

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Carlton	**13**	**10**	**3**	**0**	**47**	**8**	**33**
VIS	13	9	1	3	35	11	28
Bulleen Inter Kings	14	8	2	4	37	23	26
Melbourne Knights	13	7	2	4	37	25	23
South Melbourne	11	6	0	5	29	12	18
Gippsland Falcons	12	5	3	4	23	25	18
South Dandenong	13	5	3	5	19	24	18
Fawkner Blues	12	3	3	6	13	26	12
Melbourne Knights Academy	11	3	0	8	10	19	9
Albury Wodonga	13	2	2	9	18	46	8
Preston Lions	13	1	1	11	12	61	4

ROUND 15

Wednesday 1 March 2000
Fawkner Blues v Preston Lions, (C B Smith Reserve, 6.30 pm)

Saturday 4 March 2000
VIS v Bulleen Inter, (Grange Reserve, 4 pm)
Gippsland Falcons v Albury Wodonga, (Falcons Stadium, 4 pm)

Sunday 5 March 2000
Melbourne Knights v South Melbourne, (Knights Stadium, 4 pm)
Carlton v Melb Knights Academy (To be arranged)
South Dandenong v Bye

By Roy Hay

The Melbourne Knights turned the game between the Youth team and the Academy into a real test for all taking part, particularly the youth players seeking to impress senior coach Vlado Vanis. So four regular seniors, Dragi Nastevski, Paul Urlovic, Jason Vukadin, Roddy Vargas and Hrvoje Matkovic lined up with the Academy to put the Youth through its paces.

A high quality and fiercely competitive match resulted with the Youth getting home by two goals to one. Marin Kolceg opened for the Youth after 19 minutes and more than an hour had passed before Jasmin Sehic managed to conjure up a second goal. A quick reply by Michael Vonja on 71 minutes set up a rip-roaring finish but the Youth came out on top. Coach Luciano Trani was delighted with the effort and commitment of the Youth team into which he introduced 13 year old Serkan Oksuz late in the game. This young striker banged in forty goals in the Super League last year and is definitely one to watch. Apart from the goalscorers Daniel Bilaver, Ivan Gelemanovic and wing back Chris Tabak caught the eye.

Simon Colosimo made his long awaited come-back for Carlton in the match against Bulleen which ended in a one-all draw on Saturday.

Unfortunately for Colosimo, after being on the receiving end of some pretty hefty challenges, he protested too volubly to the referee and received a red card, which will delay his return to senior soccer. Dusko Delic scored Carlton's goal and Xhezair Sulemani equalised for Bulleen with his seventh goal of the season.

Gippsland Falcons overwhelmed Preston Lions by six goals to one, but it was Preston who took the lead after only five minutes with a goal by Zoran Alexovski. Thereafter the Falcons stepped up a gear and Tony Pardo equalised after 11 minutes. Next came Peter Kakos with the first of his hat-trick after 20 minutes. In the second half Ben Cassar was on target on 58, Pardo again after 68 and Kakos completed his hat-trick in 82 and 89 minutes.

The VIS proved too strong for South Dandenong winning by three goals to one. Playing with the wind the VIS struck after only two minutes through David Terek. Evan Papadopoulos made it two in 36 and just after the interval Terek scored his second. Christian Barra replied for South Dandenong a minute later with a header which struck a defender on the way in. For once South Dandenong's squad was less disciplined, perhaps missing key players such as the Memetis, Festim Zekiri and Lirim Rasimi. The VIS midfield ran the show.

The match between South Melbourne and Fawkner Blues was postponed because of the condition of the pitch and Albury Wodonga had the bye.

LEADING SCORERS

Anthony Pelikan	**Melbourne Knights**	**13**
Adam Curcija	Bulleen	9
Andrew Mashoian	South Melbourne	9
Angelo Motsiopoulos	Carlton	9
David Martin	Albury Wodonga	9
Ace Stojcevski	Carlton	7
Xhezair Sulimani	Bulleen	7
David Terek	VIS	7
Deniz Ekici	Carlton	6
Naum Sekulovski	VIS	6
Evan Papadopoulos	VIS	6
Adam Curcija	Bulleen	5
David Debevc	Carlton	5
Carmelo Impiombato	Melbourne Knights	5
Josip Loncaric	Melbourne Knights	5
Ali Ibrahim	Preston Lions	5
Mark Tsiorlas	VIS	5

JUNIOR SOCCER

KURT TAKES GIANT LEAP

By Daniel Giorelando

The Newcastle Breakers have so far this year had their most successful season to date, placed in the top two of the NSL ladder, things are looking bright for the club.

Although with the top graders doing so well, little has been mentioned about the club's Youth and Colts teams.

With the Colts travelling well in midtable and the Youth team battling for a playoff spot, the future for the Breakers looks to be in good hands.

And for one member of that Youth team, Kurt O'Brien, who is playing his first season in the National Youth league, this year has been distinctively special for that reason.

"My biggest achievement so far is playing in the National Soccer League," says Kurt, who has made the big step up from club soccer to the NYL, a step he says was much bigger than he had anticipated.

"It has been a pretty big step up from where I was playing last year. It is a lot quicker and much more technical," said Kurt

Playing right midfield for the Youth team gives Kurt a chance to play a more attacking and expansive game, one which coach Bobby Naumov has encouraged him to execute this season.

"My coach has told me make sure I get forward and when the ball is wide, to make sure I get in box," a task that suits the hard working style of Kurt.

However the 17-year-old feels that his season to date has been inferior but a new year has meant a change of fortune for the young star who has now seemingly cemented himself a spot in the Youth team.

"My start was pretty average, I played only one game in the first 13 although since then I have started every game."

And surprisingly the average start of Kurt this season has been mirrored by that of the team, who recorded three losses in their first three games.

But since then, The Breakers Youth have excelled to become one of the most feared teams, but as Kurt explains, the teams' objective of making the playoff stage is still not secure.

"We lost our first three but since then we have played well. If we work together and start to gel we have a chance but we have to keep winning to make it into the top four.

"To make the top four, we have to win most of our 10 or so games," believes Kurt.

And to achieve this, Kurt and his teamamates will have to work hard both on and off the park, although with Kurt commencing University studies, the next month will certainly challenge Kurt's commitment between soccer and Uni.

Although Kurt says that his dream of playing for the Breakers is so strong that he will do everything he can to get a first grade spot.

"It is pretty hard, but I still have to find the time, but it makes it more enjoyable.

"Ever since I was a kid, I have dreamed of playing for the Breakers. I have always wanted to play in the top league.

"Even though I have a fair bit to improve on, I will keep a positive attitude in order to play for them [Breakers first grade]."

But it is that burning passion to play in the NSL and the commitment that Kurt has shown for the Club as well as chasing the common dream of playing overseas, which pushes the midfielder to play every game as if it was his last.

Kurt O'Brien: Excellent season.

"I play to the best of my ability and never give up. My mum always says to me if I do my best, it doesn't matter what happens because you know you did your best and that is the way I feel," says Kurt.

With Kurt currently playing to the best of his ability, it is safe to say that this Breakers Youth star will one day reach his dream of playing First grade in the NSL but first things first — the Breakers charge towards a playoff berth, of which Kurt will certainly play a major role in.

Rivaldo: Favourite player.

PROFILE

Name:	Kurt William O'Brien
DOB:	10/4/82
Foot:	Right
Eye Colour:	Blue
Hair Colour:	Blond
Position Played:	Midfield
Current Club:	Newcastle Breakers
Previous Clubs:	Edgeworth/Valentine

ACHIEVEMENTS

Playing in National Youth League

PERSONALITY

Favourite Actor:	Heather Graham
Favourite Comedian:	Eddie Murphy
Favourite Magazine:	ABSW
Favourite Food:	Pasta
Favourite Drink:	Chocolate Milkshake
Favourite TV Show:	Just Shoot Me

If you had three wishes, what would they be?

1- To be a proffessional soccer player
2- Marry a famous actress
3- Own a mansion

THE PEERS

Favourite Overseas Players:	Rivaldo
Favourite Overseas Team:	Ajax
Favourite Aussie based Overseas:	Harry Kewell
Favourite Home based Aussie:	Paul Trimboli
Favourite Admired Defender:	Adam Skelly
Favourite Admired Midfielder:	David Beckham
Favourite Admired Striker:	Jimmy Floyd Hasselbaink
Favourite Admired Goalkeeper:	Mark Bosnich
Major Influences:	Parents/Coaches

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SOCCER WOMAN

By Janene Mar

DAWNEY BOLTS INTO SQUAD

Tweed Heads striker Belinda Dawney is an unexpected addition to the Matildas Squad less than seven months before the Olympic Games kickoff.

The 18-year-old has bolted from nowhere to now be selected as a member of the 24-strong Olympic Athlete Program (OAP) Squad, and arrived in Canberra last Tuesday to join the rest of the Matildas in full-time training at the AIS.

QAS Sting's Dawney first came to notice on her way to winning the Ansett Summer Series award of Highest Goalscorer for 1999/2000. It was her rookie season in the national league.

Yet Dawney only first took up competitive soccer less than three years ago. Touch football was her number one focus, and only in these last few weeks has the teenager finally been able to bring herself to cut her ties with touch, a sport in which she is regarded as one of the best for her age.

The Year 12 student was brought in to the AIS for a week earlier this month and obviously impressed National Coach Chris Tanzey. Unfazed by the situation, Dawney made the most of her opportunity, setting alight training matches, at times 'taking the mickey' with her male opponents. Fearless and uninhibited on the field, Dawney's greatest weapon of lightning speed is well utilised, ably supported with a good understanding of the game and a sweet left foot.

The opportunity to bring in another player has opened up with the absence of experienced strikers Sunni Hughes and Julie Murray. Hughes is back in Newcastle with her ill mother, and Murray has just started the road back to recovery from ankle surgery.

"Mum started crying, Nan started crying, and Dad was really, really happy," said Dawney of her family's reaction to the big news she brought back from her week in Canberra. "Dad started giving me cuddles and the whole night he was talking about it. The whole time we were out, my brother was telling everyone. They were all congratulating me, but I had to walk off — I got scared, it hadn't sunk in."

Tanzey commented on Dawney's inclusion, "We're fairly light up front now with Sunni away and Julie out for three to four months and we need some cover there. Belinda's very quick, and I think she'll fit in well. The best way to see if she kicks on was to bring her in. Like everyone else, we're hopeful she'll be successful. As I said from day one, there's always the opportunity of someone coming from outside. It keeps the pressure on those here that we're still out there looking. Michael Owens (England) six months before the World Cup was unknown, so you never know."

The young Dawney tried her hand at sport of all descriptions. She reached the State Schools Championships as a 100 and 200 metre sprinter in her first two years of high school. In softball, she made the North Coast Schools Team. She was also a natural at cricket, tennis and surfing.

But it was touch where she made the greatest inroads from an early age. First playing in her final year of primary school, she was selected for the NSW High Schools side as a Year 7 student. At the championships, she was picked as a Reserve for the NSW All-Schools but received the call-up into the Team itself two days before the tournament upon the withdrawal of another player. She ended up being named Player of the Finals, a title she was awarded a total of three consecutive years.

Inevitably, she was selected for the Australian U18 Schools Team in 1996/97, and ended the fortnight-long tour to New Zealand undefeated.

In 1998, Dawney broke into the open ranks, and at age 16 was selected for the Gold Coast Sharks National Touch League team, the youngest by nearly three years. Her team lost the final to a Sydney outfit.

It was a friend who finally got Dawney onto the soccer field in mid-1997, playing for Tweed Heads in the Gold Coast competition.

"A friend said they needed a few extra players. I always went to watch them, but for once in my life, I realised I could play. I always wanted to play soccer but I guess I was scared. I was playing heaps of touch and had no time."

Although her only previous experience was mucking around in the schoolyard, Dawney was an obvious talent. Despite only playing half that first season, Dawney finished as Tweed's top scorer, a title she has gone on to hold ever since. Soon her coach Peter Orr prompted her to play representative soccer, and she was selected for the North Coast Schoolgirls. But Orr knew she had the ability to aim higher, and asked her to train in Brisbane once a week with the QAS. Dawney turned it down - touch was her priority. With Schoolgirls, Dawney then made the NSW 2nds Team, but again withdrew to play touch.

Belinda Dawney: Short trip to the top.

Her selection for the NSW 1sts and NSW All-Schools in 1998 saw her then gain selection for the Australian Schoolgirls Team for internationals against New Zealand. This was at last the catalyst for Dawney to start to take her soccer seriously.

"Ever since then, I've played soccer. I stopped playing touch, except at school." Dawney says she doesn't regret not starting soccer earlier, and is happy to now just 'see how far I can go'. But after such a long tussle with the two sports, it wasn't easy to give touch away.

"I've grown to love soccer now. I love touch and have met heaps of people through playing, but it's more fun playing soccer. It took two years to give up, to decide. But everyone kept harassing me about it, saying I shouldn't be playing touch and I could be playing at a much higher level with soccer. I just thought 'Whatever', but then I thought I may as well give it a go."

At the 1999 Queensland State Titles, after being carried off on a stretcher during the final, Dawney was to learn of her selection for the Queensland Youth and Open Teams. She knocked back the Open Team, and later also turned down her place with the Queensland Youth side, opting to go once more with the NSW Schoolgirls.

Thankfully, Dawney had also been invited to train with the QAS Squad after the State Titles and at last took up the opportunity. Her parents drove her to training in Brisbane from her Tweed Heads home on the NSW side of the border, almost an hour and a half journey each way. Coach Mike Mulvey soon included the new find in his national league training squad and the rest is history.

"It was a bit trippy," said Dawney of her first Summer Series season and winning the goalscorer's award with seven goals from 10 matches. "It was weird, I really wasn't expecting to do that well. Most of my goals were team goals — headers or volleys — so I've got to thank my teammates for that."

Dawney scored a hat-trick in the second last round but was unaware she was even in the running for the award. She was convinced NSW's Julie Murray had scored more after her swag of five goals on the very same day. The two were in fact level with one match remaining, but World All-Star Murray was due back in the USA. Dawney scored the all-important goal in the final round, but still did not believe Mulvey when he announced her win to the team at the end of the game.

Of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander descent, Dawney is in her fourth year as a scholarship athlete with the Indigenous Sports Program. The funding now enables her to be housed on-site at the AIS Residence although she is not an AIS Scholarship holder. Leaving behind family and friends (and the beach) at such short notice is something to which she is adjusting.

"(Living in Ressies) gets boring at times, but you've got to try and do what you can to make it feel and look like home. As long as I can sleep, do my homework, and get to training easily, it doesn't really matter. It still hasn't really sunk in that I'm down here. It's a bit scary - at times I wish I was home, but I'm glad to be here."

There was one more deed to be done before leaving home. Dawney had once again been selected for the National Touch League and was due to compete in a carnival in two weeks' time. "The coach was peed off but he was fine. I'd already said I might have to pull out. He was angry but glad for me."

On the soccer field, the challenge is just beginning, although the teenager appears quite at ease with it all.

"I'm sort of taking one day at a time, although at the same time, I want to prove to everyone that I can play — I don't want to disappoint anyone in that way.

"The Olympics motivates me and scares me. I'm just so happy to think I do have this chance to make the Olympics. I think I need to just keep training well and keep scoring goals in practice games. Hopefully I'll make the team to play Nigeria which would help my cause for the Olympics. Just to play soccer and score goals."

And is it an omen who Dawney lists as her favourite player? None other than Michael Owen.

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QUEENSLAND SOCCER FEDERATION

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XXXX LEAGUE

	P	W	D	L	GF	AG	Pts
IPSW Knights	2	2	0	0	8	1	6
Brisbane City	2	2	0	0	6	1	6
Wynnum	2	1	1	0	5	3	4
B'Berg Waves	2	1	1	0	4	2	4
Rochedale Rov	2	1	0	1	5	3	3
Brisbane Lions	2	0	1	1	1	3	1
Toowoomba Utd	2	0	1	1	1	3	1
Taringa Rovers	2	0	1	1	1	5	1
Mt Gravatt	2	0	1	1	1	6	1
Gold Coast	2	0	0	2	2	7	0

ROUND 2

Toowoomba Utd .....0 B'Berg Waves 2
IPSW Knights .....5 Mt Gravatt 0
Taringa Rovers .....0 Rochedale Rov 4
Brisbane City .....2 Brisbane Lions 0
Gold Coast .....1 Wynnum 3

DIVISION ONE SOUTH

	P	W	D	L	GF	AG	Pts
Eastern Subs	2	1	1	0	7	3	4
Olympic Utd	1	1	0	0	3	1	3
Acacia Ridge	2	1	0	1	5	4	3
Beenleigh	2	1	0	1	2	6	3
Souths Utd	1	0	1	0	1	1	1
Capalaba	1	0	1	0	0	0	1
Slacks Creek	1	0	1	0	0	0	1
Redlands Utd	2	0	1	1	2	3	1
Rocklea Utd	2	0	1	1	4	6	1

ROUND 2

Eastern Subs .....3 Rocklea Utd 3
Beenleigh .....0 Acacia Ridge 5
Souths Utd .....1 Redlands Utd 1
Capalaba - bye
Olympic Utd (Playing Sun Night)

DIVISION ONE NORTH

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
North Star	2	2	0	0	8	1	6
North Pine	2	2	0	0	5	2	6
Newmarket	2	1	1	0	4	3	4
Pine Rivers Utd	2	1	0	1	4	2	3
Mitchelton	2	1	0	1	4	6	3
Albany Creek	2	0	1	1	2	5	1
Uni of Qld	1	0	0	1	2	3	0
Grange Thistle	1	0	0	1	1	3	0
The Gap	2	0	0	2	2	7	0

ROUND 2

North Star .....4 Albany Creek 1
The Gap .....2 Mitchelton 4
North Pine .....2 Pine Rivers Utd 1
Newmarket .....3 Uni of Qld 2
Grange Thistle - bye

ROUND 3 FIXTURES

March 3
Rochedale Rov v Brisbane City 7.30pm
March 4
B'berg Waves v Gold Coast 7pm
March 5
Mt Gravatt v Taringa Rovers 4pm
Toowoomba Utd v IPSW Knights 4pm
Brisbane Lions v Wynnum 4pm

MAROONED

Glenn knows where his heart lies

By Glenn Davis

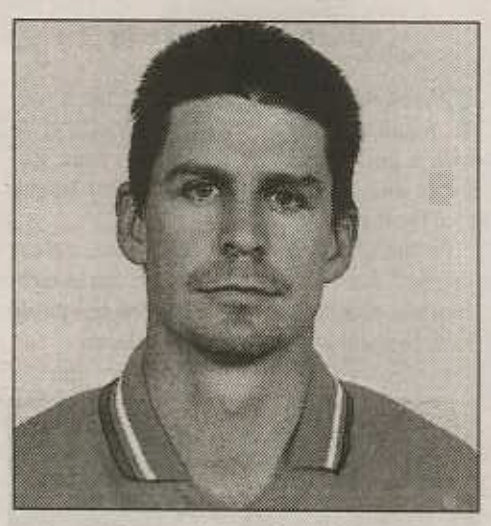
He's tough, skilful and few read the game better, but above all Brisbane Strikers' defender Glenn Gwynne is passionate for his State and the game he cherishes.

Gwynne is still only 27 years of age but with nearly 200 national league appearances, the former North Queensland product is already considered a veteran.

While enjoying every moment of the game, Gwynne feels there's something missing from his soccer career, apart from representing his country again.

Gwynnie, as he is affectionately known in soccer circles, has played only four times for his beloved State of Queensland and would dearly love to play more for the Maroons.

Gwynne is personally disappointed the current system in Australia doesn't cater for an interstate State Of Origin system along the lines of rugby league and Australian Rules.



Glenn Gywnne: Patriotic Queenslander.

"Personally I would love to play for Queensland against other States, but I don't know how passionate the other States are about a State of Origin concept," he said.

Gwynne began his career in Mossman representing Queensland at junior level before making the Australian Under 18 schoolboys' side.

After several bites, including one from glamour club Marconi, Gywnne shunned the Sydney limelight and headed to Brisbane where he played several seasons for premier league club Taringa Rovers.

Gwynne's career blossomed at Taringa and it didn't take long for him to be spotted grabbing his first State cap as a 19-year-old.

At the time Gwynne said the Queensland honour was one of his childhood goals and admitted his selection came ahead of schedule.

After State representation, it was only natural Gwynne made the successful transition to the now defunct Brisbane United in the national league.

After two years with Brisbane United, Gwynne headed for so-called greener pastures to Parramatta Eagles but after only one season away returned home to join the reformed Brisbane Strikers.

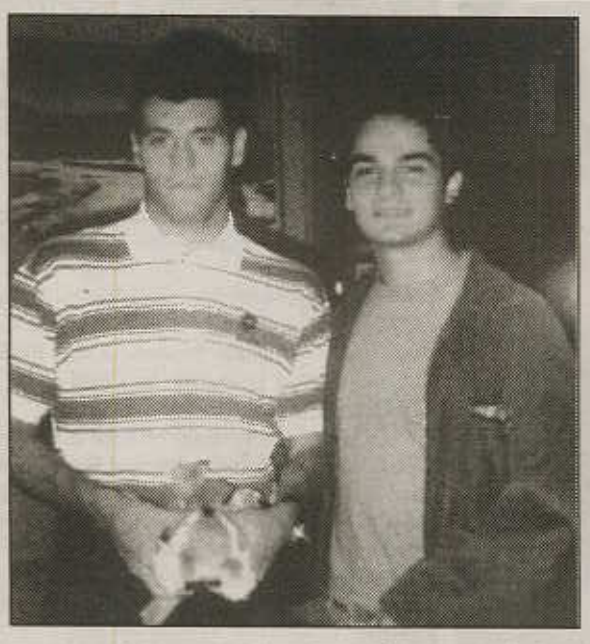
Gwynne was an instant hit again in Brisbane and went on to form an integral part of the successful Grand Final winning side under coach Frank Farina.

Despite several seasons in the national league, Gwynne has only scored twice in his career and wants to improve on that meagre record.

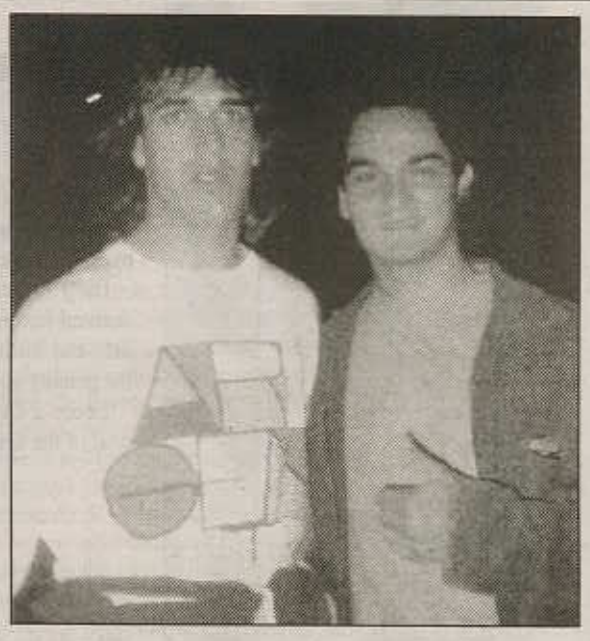
"I've only got two goals at the moment but it would be nice to get a few more before I finish up," he said.

It sounds a little odd that at 27, Gywnne speaks of "finishing up" as if retirement is just around the corner.

Such an age is normally regarded as the prime of a player's career and perhaps there's still plenty of time for him to reach another milestone by posting double figures in the goal scoring department.



FAMOUS PHOTOS



Inan Koktas seen pictured with two champion Argentine stars. — with penalty shoot-out specialist Sergio Goycochea (left) and thumbs up to 'Batigol', Gabriel Batistuta (right).

DUE TO POPULAR DEMAND STUMP THE EDITOR WILL RETURN NEXT WEEK

WORLD

ITALIAN SERIE A

BARI 1
TORINO 1

Swedish forward Yksel Osmanovski scored with the last kick of the first half to put Bari ahead but Marco Ferrante's 11th goal of the season, from a curling 25-metre free kick, earned Torino a draw which kept them out of the relegation zone.

BOLOGNA 0
PIACENZA 0

Dull draw which left ninth-placed Bologna with only 19 goals to their name this season – fewer than any Serie A side apart from Piacenza themselves, who remained bottom.

CAGLIARI 0
AC MILAN 0

Milan squandered a chance to keep up the pressure on Juventus at the top and remained third.

Alberto Zaccheroni's side were outclassed by the Sardinians and failed to produce a single shot on goal after the interval.

INTER MILAN 3
VENEZIA 0

Christian Vieri's 13th goal of the season with a left-foot half volley from 25 metres broke the deadlock at the end of the first half.

South Americans Ivan Zamorano and Alvaro Recoba added goals after the break to keep Marcello Lippi's side in the title race. Vieri went off injured just before time.

Ivan Zamorano: Scorer in Inter's 3-0 demolition of Venezia.

Abel Balbo: Celebrates his goal against the hapless Parma. The Fiorentines were emphatic in victory – 4-0.

JUVENTUS 2
AS ROMA 1

Juve had defender Paolo Montero sent off after 40 minutes but still fought back for a win which took them four points clear.

Dutchman Edgar Davids opened the scoring in the 31st minute with a left-foot strike. Marco Delvecchio equalised for Roma with a brilliant volley on the turn before Filippo Inzaghi grabbed Juve's winner with the first attack after the break.

PERUGIA 0
VERONA 0

Bad-tempered draw which did neither side's hopes of avoiding relegation any good.

French midfielder Ibrahim Ba tore tendons in his right knee in the 47th minute and was expected to be out for the rest of the season.

REGGINA 2
LECCE 1

Reggina continued their admirable first season in Serie A with a convincing win over their southern rivals.

Italy under-21 international Andrea Pirlo crashed home a brilliant free kick after 11 minutes and Mohamed Kallon added a second from the penalty spot.

Lecce's Cristiano Lucarelli scored his 13th goal of the season with a 72nd minute penalty.

LAZIO 2
UDINESE 1

Right back Paolo Negro scored a rare goal to put Lazio in front before Marcelo Salas's 11th goal of the season sealed the Rome side's win shortly after the break.

Substitute Tomas Locatelli grabbed a scrappy consolation goal a minute from time but Udinese's five-match unbeaten run ended.

PARMA 0
FIORENTINA 4

Fiorentina ended a run of more than a year without an away win in emphatic style with a goal from Abel Balbo, two from Rui Costa and Predrag Mijatovic's first league goal for the club.

Parma's heaviest Serie A home defeat stretched their run without a league win to eight matches, equalling their club record and piling more pressure on coach Alberto Malesani.

Lazio's Marcelo Salas drifts past the Udinese defence. Lazio won 2-1.

RUSSO WRITES

By Joe Russo

Juventus, AC Milan and Lazio will fight out this year's Serie A title, with Inter and Roma finishing just behind the main three. No need to be Einstein to work that out!

AC Milan and Lazio were the best two teams last year, with the former claiming the honours at the last minute by a solitary point.

Juventus are always very dangerous and it is a credit to their coach, Carlo Ancelotti, that they have performed so well this year.

Only 12 months ago when Ancelotti replaced Marcello Lippi, Juventus fans protested at training and displayed banners at their home matches telling Ancelotti to go. What a difference a year makes!

AC Milan and Lazio were again expected to be 'high achievers.' Lazio were last champions back in 1974 and their fans are getting a little tired of being so close, yet so far, year in and year out.

A clear pattern has emerged between these three teams. Juventus are by far the best defensively, yet the worst in attack, while AC Milan is the total opposite, with Lazio somewhere in between on both counts.

The Juventus defence, however, is of real interest. After 22 rounds, they have lost only one game and conceded only 10 goals.

In their line-up at the back the three stalwarts are Ciro Ferrara, Mark Iuliano and Paolo Montero. The latter is a Uruguayan international, Iuliano in recent years made his debut for Italy and Ferrara is a veteran that requires no introduction at all.

In goal for the 'Old Lady' is Dutch international Edwin Van der Sar in his first year at the club. The Serie A hasn't a great tradition of foreign 'keepers and many thought Juventus had made a big mistake in letting Italian international 'keeper, Angelo Peruzzi follow coach Lippi over to Inter.

It is not surprising that their attack hasn't matched the likes of AC Milan, because Alex Del Piero and Pippo Inzaghi have hardly played together this season. However, things should now change, given that they are both fully fit and the 'mercurial' French international, Zinedine Zidane, is just behind them.

And finally, don't discount their midfield, comprised of Conte, Zambrotta, Pessotto (all of whom have played for Italy) and Dutchman Edgar Davids. It makes them the complete team and surely slightly more favourites, than Lazio and Milan, to take the 'Scudetto.'

Fiorentina's season, Champions League excluded, has been a disaster. Their recent, 0-4, loss to Roma in Rome, is testament to that. Not even the appearance of Paul Okon, in the 73rd minute of the game, could save them.

It is no secret in Florence that their legendary coach, Giovanni Trapattoni, will not be there next season.

Trapattoni, who has won seven Italian Championships (six with Juventus and one with Inter) and two German Bundesligas with Bayern Munich, will not be required for a third season in the Renaissance City.

His replacement could be none other than Zdenek Zeman, the former coach of Foggia, Lazio and Roma. Zeman also had a short stint in Turkey this year, after being surprisingly dumped by Roma at the end of last season.

Zeman has never won a title in Italy but, is regarded by many as one the most astute coaches around.

His 'claim to fame,' however, has been the fact that he openly came out and accused players in the Serie A of drug taking. The subsequent inquiry lasted over a year and nothing substantial was ever found.

WORLD

ENGLISH PREMIER LEAGUE

ARSENAL 3
SOUTHAMPTON 1

Glenn Hoddle's first defeat in three games as Southampton manager was inflicted by his former Monaco mentor Arsene Wenger.

Fredrik Ljungberg made the breakthrough in the 21st minute after a Dennis Bergkamp through ball.

Bergkamp nodded the second from Brazilian Silvinho's cross. Dean Richards gave Southampton hope in the 61st but Ljungberg settled the match with his second seven minutes later.

BRADFORD CITY 1
ASTON VILLA 1

Paul Merson demoralised struggling Bradford with a curling right-footed effort in the 39th minute after a well-aimed cross from Italian Benito Carbone. But Dean Windass grabbed a precious equaliser with a header in the 76th.

Portugal's Jorge Cadete hit the bar on his Bradford debut.

CHELSEA 2
WATFORD 1

Marcel Desailly put Chelsea ahead in the second attack of the game. Bottom club Watford hit the woodwork twice before equalising six minutes from the break through Allan Smart.

Jon Harley then scored his first goal for Chelsea in the 64th after a cross from Romanian Dan Petrescu.

COVENTRY 0
TOTTENHAM 1

Chris Armstrong provided the winner eight minutes from time, rising unchallenged to head in a Darren Anderton corner that Magnus Hedman fumbled over the line.

It was Spurs' first goal in four games. Coventry's Mustapha Hadji came close in each half but was kept out by Ian Walker.

MIDDLESBROUGH 0
LEEDS 0

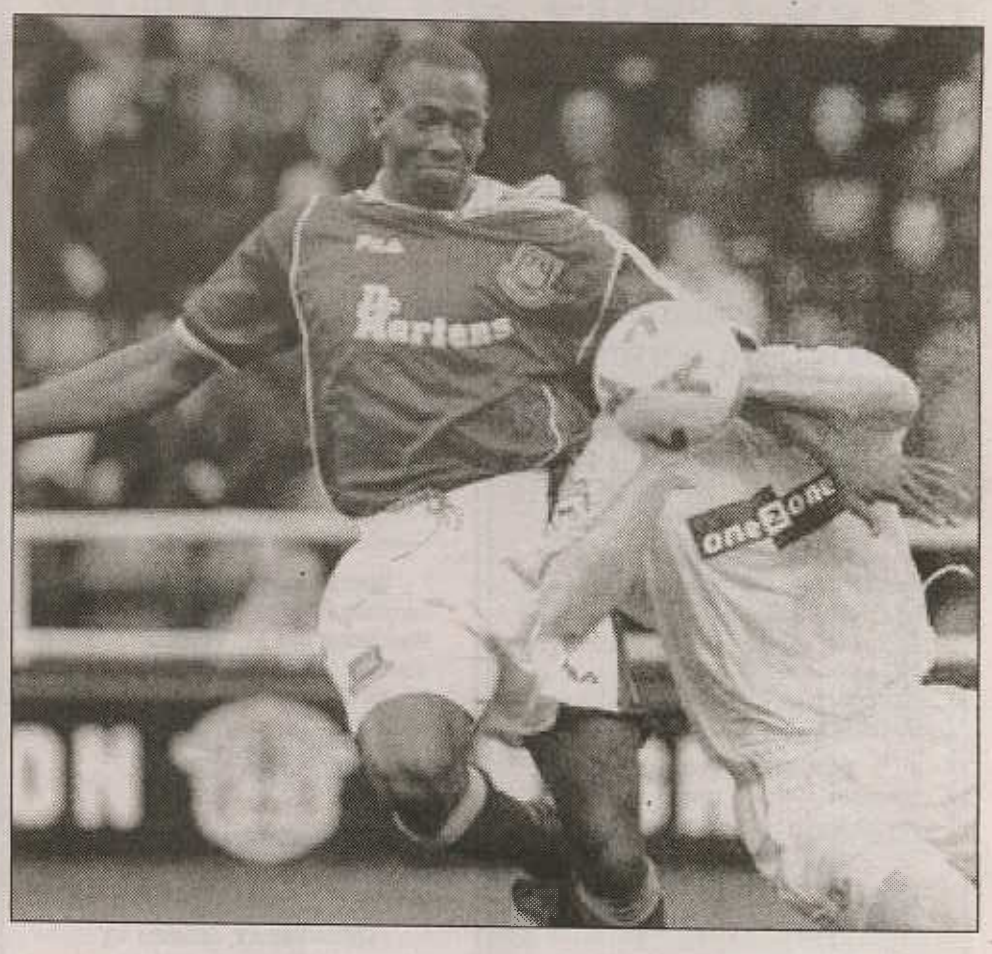
Leeds' Lee Bowyer had the ball in the net early on but was ruled offside. Bowyer also twice hit the woodwork in a match championship chasing Leeds should have won.

'Boro were down to 10 men for the final four minutes when Italian Gianluca Festa collected his second booking of the game.

SHEFFIELD WED 0
NEWCASTLE 2

Newcastle beat Wednesday 8-0 in September as their revival under Bobby Robson took off but they settled for a more restrained result at Hillsborough as Wednesday suffered their third successive home defeat.

Kevin Gallacher put the visitors ahead in the 11th after Duncan Ferguson flicked on a long ball out of defence. Alan Shearer sealed the points in the 86th with a goal that left a suspicion of offside.



The Hammers had no luck against Everton going down 4-0.

SUNDERLAND 1
DERBY COUNTY 1

Struggling Derby were unlucky not to win after taking the lead on the hour through Malcolm Christie.

Alex Rae equalised in the 62nd from a Michael Gray cross.

WEST HAM UNITED 0
EVERTON 4

Italian Paolo di Canio was injured and avoided a meeting with referee Paul Alcock, the man he pushed to the ground in an infamous 1998 clash.

The Hammers missed their prolific striker and went behind in the seventh minute through Nicky Barmby who went on to complete the first hat-trick of his career.

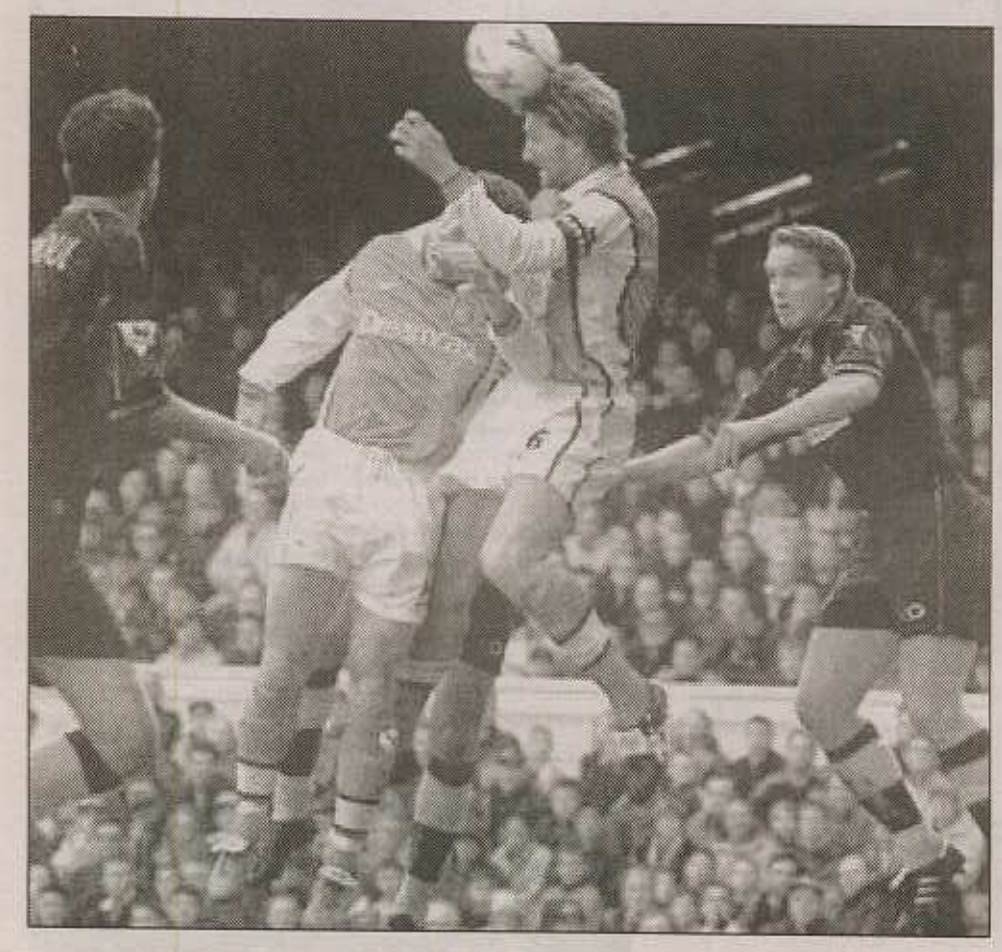
Joe Max-Moore provided the fourth goal in a baptism of fire for goalkeeper Sasa Ilic, replacing the injured Shaka Hislop.

WIMBLEDON 2
MANCHESTER UNITED 2

Wimbledon director Sam Hammam, who sold his stake in the club during the week, was given a standing ovation and saw his side score after one minute.

Jason Euell volleyed past goalkeeper Mark Bosnich but Jordi Cruyff equalised in the 30th after a pinpoint cross from Ryan Giggs.

Wimbledon again went ahead through a soft-looking Carl Cort header in the 62nd but striker Andy Cole salvaged a point 10 minutes from time with a precise low shot after another fine Giggs run.



Arsenal's Tony Adams clears the danger against Southampton. Arsenal won 3-1.

Leeds' Alan Smith in action against Middlesbrough. It was a match Leeds should have won.

WORLD

UEFA CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

UEFA CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

GROUP A

Porto (Portugal)
Hertha Berlin (Germany)
Barcelona (Spain)
Sparta Prague (Czech Republic)

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 23

Hertha Berlin	1	Barcelona	1
Michalke 33		Luis Enrique 14	
Sparta Prague	0	Porto	2
		Drulovic 77, Jardel 84	

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 8

Porto	1	Hertha Berlin	0
Drulovic 78			
Barcelona	5	Sparta Prague	0
Kluivert 44, 63			
Luis Enrique 45, 76			
Guardiola 59			

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 1

Barcelona v Porto
Hertha Berlin v Sparta Prague

TUESDAY, MARCH 7

Porto v Barcelona
Sparta Prague v Hertha Berlin

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 15

Barcelona v Hertha Berlin
Porto v Sparta Prague

TUESDAY, MARCH 21

Hertha Berlin v Porto
Sparta Prague v Barcelona

Table

Porto	2	2	0	0	3	0	6
Barcelona	2	1	1	0	6	1	4
Hertha Berlin	2	0	1	1	1	2	1
Sparta Prague	2	0	0	2	0	7	0

GROUP B

Bordeaux (France)
Fiorentina (Italy)
Manchester United (England)
Valencia (Spain)

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 23

Fiorentina	2	Manchester Utd	0
Batistuta 25, Balbo 52			
Valencia	3	Bordeaux	0
Farinos 60, Ilie 66, Gonzalez 88			

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 8

Bordeaux	0	Fiorentina	0
Manchester Utd	3	Valencia	0
Keane 38, Solskjaer 47 Scholes 69			

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 1

Manchester Utd v Bordeaux
Fiorentina v Valencia

TUESDAY, MARCH 7

Bordeaux v Manchester Utd
Valencia v Fiorentina

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 15

Manchester Utd v Fiorentina
Bordeaux v Valencia

TUESDAY, MARCH 21

Fiorentina v Bordeaux
Valencia v Manchester Utd

Table

Fiorentina	2	1	1	0	2	0	4
Manchester Utd	2	1	0	1	3	2	3
Valencia	2	1	0	1	3	3	3
Bordeaux	2	0	1	1	0	3	1

GROUP C

Bayern Munich (Germany)
Dynamo Kiev (Ukraine)
Real Madrid (Spain)
Rosenborg Trondheim (Norway)

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 24

Dynamo Kiev	1	Real Madrid	2
Rebrov 85pen		Morientes 17, Raul 48	
Rosenborg	1	Bayern Munich	1
Skammelsrud 47		Jancker 10	

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 7

Bayern Munich	2	Dynamo Kiev	1
Jancker 6, Sergio 80		Rebrov 50	
Real Madrid	3	Rosenborg	1
Raul 17, Savio 85 Carlos 90		Carew 47	

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 29

Real Madrid v Bayern Munich
Dynamo Kiev v Rosenborg

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 8

Bayern Munich v Real Madrid
Rosenborg v Dynamo Kiev

TUESDAY, MARCH 14

Real Madrid v Dynamo Kiev
Bayern Munich v Rosenborg

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 22

Dynamo Kiev v Bayern Munich
Rosenborg v Real Madrid

Table

Real Madrid	2	2	0	0	5	2	6
Bayern Munich	2	1	1	0	3	2	4
Rosenborg	2	0	1	1	2	4	1
Dynamo Kiev	2	0	0	2	2	4	0

GROUP D

Feyenoord (Netherlands)
Olympique Marseille (France)
Lazio (Italy)
Chelsea (England)

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 24

Marseille	0	Lazio	2
		Stankovic 64, Conceicao 78	
Chelsea	3	Feyenoord	1
Babayaro 45 Tore Flo 67, 86		Julio Cruz 90	

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 7

Feyenoord	3	Marseille	0
Cruz 72, 90 Bosvelt 83			
Lazio	0	Chelsea	0

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 29

Lazio v Feyenoord
Marseille v Chelsea

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 8

Feyenoord v Lazio
Chelsea v Marseille

TUESDAY, MARCH 14

Lazio v Marseille
Feyenoord v Chelsea

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 22

Marseille v Feyenoord
Chelsea v Lazio

Table

Chelsea	2	1	1	0	3	1	4
Lazio	2	1	1	0	2	0	4
Feyenoord	2	1	0	1	4	3	3
Marseille	2	0	0	2	0	5	0

ENGLAND FAVOURITE FOR 2006 WORLD CUP

FIFA president Sepp Blatter praised England's bid to stage the 2006 World Cup finals last week and at the same time said it was not, as some had predicted, a foregone conclusion the finals would go to Africa.

Blatter, in England for the annual meeting of FIFA's law-making International Board at the former stately home of Cliveden, said: "I was misquoted when I said that Germany were 'nearly favourites' for the World Cup when I was in Germany recently for the 100th anniversary celebrations of the German FA.

"I said they had a very strong bid — and the English bid is equally strong. Everybody around the world knows that both of these countries are able to organise a World Cup — but the difference with England's bid is that all the others have to reach FIFA's standards — England have them already.

"England already has safe, secure all-seater stadiums. There is a special feeling for the World Cup in England and I can understand the feeling and complimented the International Football Association Board for how the game is organised here.

"This is the homeland of football, I know there is a lot of sympathy around the world for football in England, the Premier League and the FA Cup — but there is also a feeling that the World Cup should rotate around the continents.

"However, the idea of rotation is not yet anchored in FIFA's regulations — it might be in the minds of people — but people will have to vote not with their hearts but with reason and a rationale that makes sense.

"FIFA cannot impose the idea of rotation — it is not definite the World Cup will go to Africa because of rotation.

Sepp Blatter: Full of praise for England.

The idea of rotation should be done by consensus if that is the right way for it to be done."

And Blatter admitted his biggest fear when the vote is taken by the 24-man FIFA executive committee in Zurich on July 6:

"I have spent a lot of time thinking what would happen if the vote is split 12-12. If that happens, I, as FIFA president, have the casting vote — and what would I do? I am not sure I can say now."

One point Blatter was sure about, however, was that he did not want FIFA's inspection committee to present five "equal" bid evaluations when they complete their five-country tour of inspection shortly.

They have already visited Brazil, England and Germany and will be visiting Morocco and South Africa in the next few weeks.

"When they came back from Asia four years ago the inspectors said there was nothing to choose between South Korea and Japan.

Well, when they report back to me this time, I want the bids to be ranked from 1 to 5.

"Of course all the bids are equal at the moment and I have not looked at the reports of any of them. I want to see them all together."

While the 2006 World Cup is the focus of much attention in the bidding countries, Blatter said he was pleased with the progress being made towards the next World Cup in South Korea and Japan in 2002.

"I don't think we will have any problems as far as organisation and facilities is concerned. We saw when the draw was made in Tokyo in December everything worked perfectly and I am sure it will be the same in South Korea.

"The only thing that does worry me is that in effect you have two World Cups — with just one income — you will have two main press centres, two International Broadcasting Centres — and 10 stadiums in each country.

"Still, I am sure it will be very interesting because for the first time both the European countries and the South American countries will be playing "away" and I am sure there will be some upsets."

QUARTER FINALS

First Leg — April 5
Second Leg — April 19

SEMI-FINALS

First Leg — May 3
Second Leg — May 10

FINAL

Wednesday, May 24
At Stade de France

WORLD

FIFA World Rankings

(Valid until March 15)

1	Brazil	70=	FYR Macedonia	138	Bahrain
2	Czech Republic	70=	Algeria	139	St Kitts & Nevis
3	France	72	Estonia	140	Tahiti
4	Spain	73	Guatemala	141	Benin
5	Germany	74	Honduras	142	St Vincent/Gr
6	Argentina	75	Mali	143	Andorra
7	Norway	76=	Burkina Faso	144	Ethiopia
8	Romania	76=	Senegal	145	Maldives
9	Croatia	78	Gabon	146	Solomon Islands
10	Mexico	79	Albania	147	Rwanda
11	England	80=	Kuwait	148	Dominica
12	Denmark	80=	Bosnia-Herzegovina	149=	Antigua & Barbuda
13	Yugoslavia	82=	Cuba	149=	Cayman Islands
14	Italy	82=	Iraq	151	San Marino
15	Portugal	84	Togo	152	Gambia
16	Sweden	85	Canada	153	Sri Lanka
17	Paraguay	86	Namibia	154	Lesotho
18	Russia	87	Armenia	155	Dominican Republic
19	Netherlands	88	Northern Ireland	156	Laos
20	Scotland	89	Moldova	157	Nepal
21	South Africa	90	Indonesia	158	Yemen
22	United States	91	**AUSTRALIA**	159	Kyrgyzstan
23	Morocco	92	Oman	160	Mauritania
24=	Colombia	93	Guinea	161	British Virgin Is.
24=	Slovakia	94	Congo	162	Surinam
26	Chile	95	Vietnam SR	163	Bermuda
27	Tunisia	96=	Belarus	164	Niger
28=	Ukraine	96=	El Salvador	165	Botswana
28=	Israel	98=	Azerbaijan	166	Chad
30	Austria	98=	Wales	167	Netherlands Antilles
31	Turkey	100	Haiti	168	Eritrea
32=	Poland	101	New Zealand	169	Cambodia
32=	Belgium	102	Mozambique	170	Palestine
34	Cameroon	103	Singapore	171=	Philippines
35	Egypt	104	Kenya	171=	Guyana
36	Greece	105	Liberia	173	Korea DPR
37	Republic of Ireland	106	Qatar	174	Guinea-Bissau
38=	Zambia	107	India	175	Chinese Taipei
38=	Bulgaria	108	Uganda	176	Central African Rep.
40	Saudi Arabia	109	Syria	177	Macao
41	Slovenia	110	Venezuela	178=	Tonga
42=	Uruguay	111	Lebanon	178=	Cape Verde Islands
42=	Iceland	112	Faroe Islands	180	Samoa
44	Peru	113	Malta	181	Pakistan
45=	Jamaica	114	Barbados	182	Cook Islands
45=	Cote d' Ivoire	115	Malawi	183	Papua New Guinea
47	Iran	116	Jordan	184	Vanuatu
48	Korea Republic	117	Malaysia	185	Brunei Darussalam
49	Trinidad & Tobago	118	Mauritius	186	Puerto Rico
50	Hungary	119	Hong Kong	187	Sao Tome e Principe
51=	Nigeria	120	Tajikistan	188	Equatorial Guinea
51=	Switzerland	121	Sierra Leone	189	Bahamas
53=	Ghana	122	Grenada	190	Belize
53=	Lithuania	123	Panama	191	Aruba
55	Finland	124	Libya	192	Seychelles
56	Angola	125=	Luxembourg	193	Nicaragua
57	UAE	125=	Kazakhstan	194	US Virgin Islands
58	Uzbekistan	127	Liechtenstein	195	Djibouti
59=	China PR	128	Myanmar	196	Turks and Caicos Islands
59=	Georgia	129=	Tanzania	197	Somalia
61	Cyprus	129=	Swaziland	198	Guam
62	Japan	131	Turkmenistan	199=	American Samoa
63=	Costa Rica	132	St Lucia	199=	Mongolia
63=	Congo DR	133	Bangladesh	201	Montserrat
65	Thailand	134	Sudan	202	Anguilla
66	Bolivia	135	Burundi		
67	Latvia	136	Madagascar		
68=	Ecuador	137	Fiji		
68=	Zimbabwe				

***Note:** Teams inactive since 1991 and teams which have not played yet do not appear in the table.*

LEEDS DENIES $81 MILLION OFFER FOR RONALDINHO

Leeds United have offered Brazilian club Gremio $81 million for striker Ronaldinho, president Jose Alberto Guerreiro said last week.

A Leeds spokesman later denied the story, saying "it hadn't even been considered".

Guerreiro said his team in Rio Grande do Sul state would not sell the 19-year-old striker for any price.

"It makes no difference if they offer $5 million or $100 million. Gremio are not interested in selling the player," Guerreiro was quoted as saying.

It was claimed that Barcelona last week offered $71 million for Ronaldinho.

It also quoted the striker's mother, Miguelina Assis, saying she had asked Guerreiro not to send her son overseas.

"I don't want him to be without my care just yet," she said. She added her family were living comfortably on Ronaldinho's monthly salary of 50,000 reais ($28,105). Ronaldinho rose to international recognition last year when he helped Brazil win the Copa America.

After the event, Real Madrid reportedly offered Gremio $27 million for the player.

Ronaldinho: Not going abroad just yet

FRENCHMAN BACKS ENGLAND

Arsenal's French midfielder Emmanuel Petit said last week he saw England as the next leading power in world soccer both at club and country level.

"English clubs will soon overtake Italian clubs in terms of the game. They were long isolated from European soccer because of violence," he said.

"But they were reinforced with players and money and the result is an outstanding level of play," added Petit at France's training camp of Clairefontaine near Paris.

English clubs were banned from European soccer for several years following the Heysel stadium disaster in 1985 when 39 Juventus fans died. In 1999 Manchester United were the first English club to win the European Cup since then.

Petit, who joined the French squad for a friendly against Poland at the Stade de France, said he felt England would be one of the favourites for this summer's Euro 2000.

"Their national team has big potential but they're under too much scrutiny and criticism from the press and fans," he said.

"It is very difficult for them to work in good conditions.

"But they will be one of the favourites for Euro 2000 if only because they never give up, even at 5-0 down with five minutes left to play."

Petit said he felt England were now in the same position as France after they were eliminated from the 1994 World Cup by Bulgaria in 1993.

The defeat forced France into making changes which led them to a World Cup victory four years later, he said.

"I see them (England) as we were back in 1994. They have the same level of play, they're a team in the making with a bright future ahead of them," he said.

But whereas France hosted the 1998 World Cup, Petit said he was not in favour of England organising the 2006 tournament.

"I support the Moroccan bid," he said.

"I'm a great fan of Morocco. I went there a couple of times.

"It's a beautiful country and they have my full backing."

Emmanuel Petit: English Clubs will be number one.

TUNNELS TOO LONG — DESCHAMPS

France's Didier Deschamps said last week the Premier League was full of provocation and, alluding to a recent incident involving his Chelsea team, said players' tunnels were long in England.

Chelsea midfielder Dennis Wise, Wimbledon's Irish defender Kenny Cunningham and coach Mick Harford were charged after a confrontation in the players' tunnel reported to have involved about 16 players and officials after a match this month.

"Tunnels are long in English stadiums and there is a lot of provocation," Deshcamps said.

"Everybody started quarrelling and it lasted for some time and there were a few bruises," said Deschamps, who joined Chelsea from Juventus this season.

"This is English football. There is a lot of provocation and commitment. But the FA do not take this sort of incident lightly," he added.

Didier Deschamps: A lot of provocation.

Deschamps, who also played for Olympique Marseille before joining Juventus, said he had not found it difficult to adapt to Chelsea's game.

"It's a different culture, the style of play is different but in Chelsea, the culture is more Italian with an Italian coach and lots of players having played in Serie A."

ENGLAND HERO EYES POOR BEHAVIOUR

Hurst Wants Wise Men to Judge Footballers

England World Cup legend Sir Geoff Hurst has called for a panel of "wise men" to judge standards of behaviour by footballers on and off the pitch.

Hurst, hero to a generation of fans after scoring three of England's four goals against Germany in the World Cup final in 1966, said top footballers had to set an example of good conduct.

He said recent incidents involving unruly behaviour by leading English soccer stars threatened to undermine the image of footballers in the eyes of the public.

"I believe the game is going through a critical period," he said. "My feeling is there should be a body of older players involved in the disciplinary affairs of some of the players — the statesmen of the game.

"People who love the game, know the game, want to see the game of football played properly, and are passionate about the game should be involved. Footballers are role models for society and for young people in particular.

"You can call them 'wise men' or just respected senior officials and players or whatever," he said.

Hurst, in Thailand as an ambassador for English football and to promote England's bid to host the 2006 World Cup, said the panel of senior figures should set down acceptable standards of behaviour and could help adjudicate on misdemeanor cases.

INCIDENTS ON AND OFF PITCH

Asked if he would be prepared to sit on such a body, Hurst, 58, said: "If others were too busy and I were asked, sure – someone has got to do it."

English soccer has been hit by a series of cases of misconduct in recent weeks with dissent on the pitch and allegations of violent conduct off it.

Four top clubs were charged over incidents in games last week and the English Football Association has written to all clubs warning them to cut out dissent and intimidation of officials.

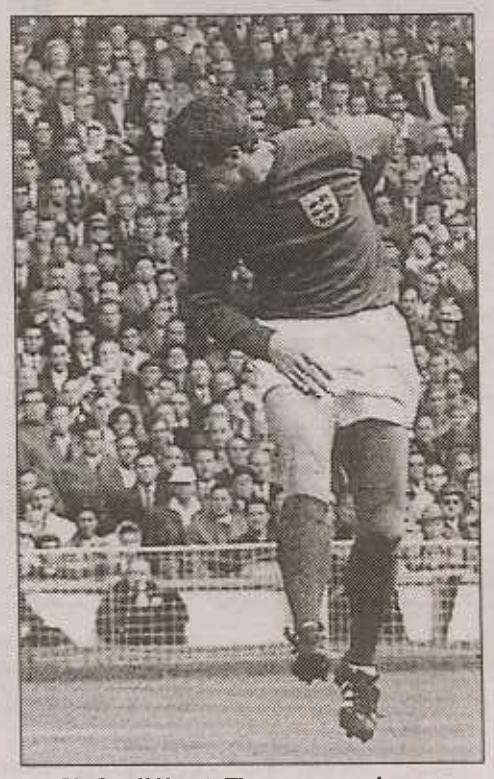
Premier League club Leicester City was forced to leave a training camp in Spain last week after striker Stan Collymore set off a fire extinguisher in a late-night incident in a bar.

Hurst said the problem of bad behaviour had to be tackled by the footballing authorities before it got worse.

"The football governing bodies did not get to grips with that and it was the government who told the clubs to get their act together.

"If the players are not behaving themselves, it is for the footballing authorities to deal with it," he said.

Hurst said the recent escalation of bad behaviour might be a result of the big money in football today.



Sir Geoff Hurst: The game needs more discipline.

TOO MUCH POWER AND OVERPAID

Despite being the only footballer ever to score a hat-trick in a World Cup final, Hurst earned only a fraction of the millions of dollars on offer to footballers today when he was a striker for London's West Ham team in the 1960s and early 1970s.

Players today have too much power and are overpaid, he said.

"We played at a time in sport when the players were not treated as well as they should have been. It was almost a serfdom. Nowadays it has gone the other way. The players have all the power. I think they have too much power," he said.

"The huge amount of money that young players are able to earn is a very dangerous combination: young people in the public eye with lots of time and lots of money."

Hurst said he would have liked to have earned more money as a player but did not regret his own career for one moment.

"People ask me, could I play today. And I say to that question 'yes'. People say the game is quicker now and ask 'would you survive?'. I think that is a load of nonsense. It is the same game," he said.

"The great players of yesteryear would be the great players of today."

Whelan on transfer list

Former England under-21 international Noel Whelan was put on the transfer list by Coventry City last week after failing to agree on a new contract with the English Premier League club.

The news is likely to alert local rivals Aston Villa, Leicester City and Derby County who have all been linked with the 25-year-old striker in recent months.

Whelan, currently sidelined with a calf injury, still has 16 months remaining on his current contract.

Coventry manager Gordon Strachan said: "We have been talking about a new contract since last summer, but Noel wants to keep his options open until the end of next season.

"That is not a good decision for the club and regretfully we have had to put him on the transfer list. But he has given us an assurance he will continue do do his best for us while he is here."

Whelan has scored 38 goals in 143 games since joining Coventry from Leeds United in December 1995 for a then-club record 2 million pounds ($5 million).

It is the third time in 15 months Coventry have opted to cash in on a senior striker following the sale of Dion Dublin to Aston Villa and Darren Huckerby to Leeds United.

FOREST LOSE $24M

Nottingham Forest said last week it made a 9.8 million pounds ($24 million) pre-tax loss in the six months to November, reflecting the effect of relegation from the premier league.

Turnover fell 46 percent to 3.86 million pounds. In 1998 it made a 2.5 million pounds first-half profit. Forest, 18th in the 24-team league, are fighting to avoid relegation in successive seasons.

HUGHES STARTS WITH A WIN

Mark Hughes came through his maiden managerial test with a victory under his belt, but only just, when Wales defeated Qatar 1-0 last week.

Striker John Robinson scored the only goal in the 10th minute of the international friendly match.

With Wales preparing for the World Cup qualifiers in September and Qatar gearing for the more imminent Asia Cup qualifying final rounds, much was expected of this match but it turned out to be a somnolent affair.

The visitors pulled down the shutters after their early strike and the hosts groped in the dark in their chase for an equaliser which eluded them until the end.

Wales, minus the Manchester United winger Ryan Giggs, did not live up to local expectations.

Pitted, as they were, against an amateur side, the British team failed to make any lasting impression either on their rivals or on the large crowd that turned out to witness the match.

Mark Hughes: Winning start.

"I am not happy with the performance of our team," said Hughes, who was taking charge for the first time since being confirmed as manager.

"We are definitely capable of playing better. We weren't strong in attack. Though we wanted to score more goals we couldn't. I should also give credit to the young Qatari defenders who did a good job," he added.

Qatar coach Jamal Haji, said that he was satisfied with his team's performance.

"I am quite happy. We conceded just one goal to a team which is rated much higher than us, a team with professional players," he said.

FIFA TO INTRO PRO REFEREES

FIFA plan to establish a list of professional referees by the end of 2000 who would officiate at the 2002 World Cup finals.

FIFA said the salaries of the professional referees would be paid by the national association in countries with a professional league.

Where such a league structure did not exist FIFA would pay their salaries.

"The professional referee must and will be introduced. It is not logical for a game that is becoming increasingly professional to still be refereed by amateurs," said FIFA president Joseph Blatter.

No firm date was given for the introduction of the professional officials but they would be in place in time to take charge of matches at the World Cup in South Korea and Japan.

Schmeichel appoints manager

Sporting Lisbon goalkeeper Peter Schmeichel has hired fellow Dane Jan Soerensen as manager of Hvidovre, the Danish club he bought last year.

Soerensen, 44, will join Hvidovre from July 1 on a three-year contract, Schmeichel said.

Schmeichel bought the Copenhagen club, where he made his debut in 1984, in December.

Soerensen was manager of England's Walsall in 1997-98 after 13 years as a professional for clubs such as Club Bruges (1977-81), Feyenoord (1984-86) and Ajax Amsterdam (1986-87). He earned 11 caps for Denmark from 1977 to 1981.

Schmeichel said Soerensen's main task will be to lead first division Hvidovre back into Denmark's superleague. Hvidovre have won three titles but took their latest title back in 1981.

Peter Schmeichel: Hired fellow Dane.

WORLD

A LEGEND DIES

England pays tribute to Sir Stanley Matthews

Sir Stanley Matthews, the mesmerising England winger who wrong-footed defenders for 33 years and became the original European footballer of the year at the age of 41, has died. He was 85.

"I loved him, he was a magical player. They don't come very often," said Sir Bobby Charlton.

"He just attracted people, they had to go and see him.

"People still miss him in the game — he was a genius really."

Matthews died in a private hospital in north Staffordshire after a short illness.

His death was announced shortly before England were due to play a friendly international against Argentina at Wembley, scene of Matthews' greatest triumphs.

Both teams wore black armbands in honour of Matthews and a minute's silence was held in the packed stadium.

Matthews was never booked in his 33-year league career and only reluctantly retired at 50, saying later that he should have continued for another year or two.

Former England manager Bobby Robson said English soccer had lost a truly great player and he had lost a friend.

"He was easily one of our greatest, greatest players," he said. "He would have played in today's game, he would have adapted don't you worry about that.

"He had immense skill, great skill off the ball and was a beautiful dribbler."

A hospital spokesman said Matthews, who had recently returned from the Spanish island of Tenerife, had died after a short illness related to health problems that he had first suffered three years ago. His wife died last August.

QUIET MAGICIAN

Many remembered Matthews as a magician on the field but a shy and unassuming man off it.

"He was the greatest in my era in terms of close control," said Sir Tom Finney, an England colleague. "He was a humble man and he never got carried away by how well he played."

Former England manager Sir Walter Winterbottom recalled Matthews' remarkable fitness and speed and the skill that earned him fame as the "Wizard of the Dribble".

"Wingers in those days just stayed on the wing and Stan had that unique way of dribbling past people," he said.

Matthews spent his 33-year league career with two unfashionable north of England clubs, Stoke City and Blackpool.

Others have won more caps and many have earned far more money, but few have found a place in a nation's heart like Matthews.

He won 54 international caps and was the first man to be named European footballer of the year at the age of 41. He also became Britain's first football knight.

Matthews made his international debut at the age of 19 and collected his last cap in 1956 when, aged 41, he mesmerised the Brazilian defence in England's 4-2 win at Wembley.

But his most famous game was for Blackpool, whom he joined from Stoke in 1947, in the 1953 FA Cup final against Bolton at Wembley, thereafter always called "The Matthews Final".

With 30 minutes remaining, Bolton were leading 3-1 when Matthews, his baggy shorts flapping around his knees, inspired the comeback which has now become part of football's folklore.

Stanley Matthews: Tribute to a true hero.

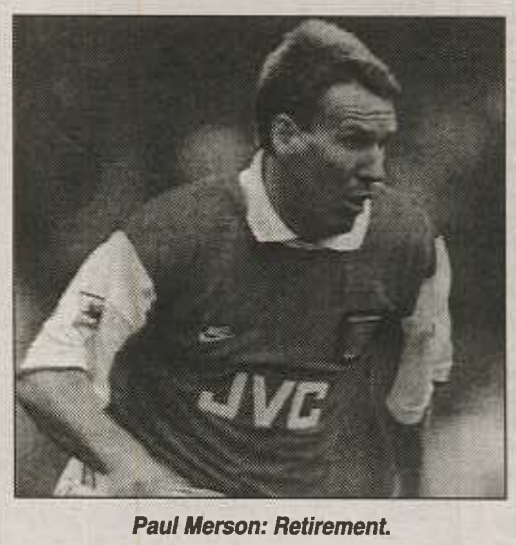
He tore the Bolton defence to pieces, set up three goals and was carried off the Wembley pitch shoulder-high by his jubilant team mates.

"He was always a true gentleman and someone who is synonymous with English football," said former England captain Gary Lineker.

"Sir Stanley was and will always remain one of the all time sporting greats," said Prime Minister Tony Blair.

"He was not only one of the finest players this country has ever seen, he was also a model sportsman who played the game as it should be played, never booked or sent off once. Football fans the world over have lost one of their heroes."

Merson says his career is over



Paul Merson: Retirement.

Aston Villa midfielder Paul Merson has confirmed his international retirement after failing to win a place in Kevin Keegan's latest England squad.

The former Arsenal and Middlesbrough player had said he would quit if not called up for the friendly against Argentina and despite Keegan saying he hoped Merson would remain available, stuck to his word.

"I've now retired from international football," said Merson, whose England career spanned a nine-year period during which he also went into rehabilitation for problems with gambling, alcohol and cocaine.

Merson was capped 21 times, the last one coming in a friendly against the Czech Republic in November 1998.

FRIENDLY INTERNATIONALS

In Kalamata:
Greece .....4 **Austria** 1
Scorers: Greece - George Georgiadis 36, 55, Marinos Ouzounidis 82, Vassilis Lakis 90
Austria - Ivica Vastic 44
Halftime: 1-1; Attendance: 6000

★★★

In Doha:
Qatar .....0 **Wales** 1
Scorer: John Robinson 10
Halftime: 0-1

★★★

In Haifa:
Israel .....4 **Russia** 1
Scorers: Israel - Walid Badir 3, 35, Kfir Udi 16, Avi Nimni 86
Russia Vladimir Beschestnykh 58pen
Halftime: 3-0; Attendance: 11,000

★★★

In Istanbul:
Turkey .....0 **Norway** 2
Scorers: John Arne Riise 37, Roar Strand 73
Halftime: 0-1 Attendance: 5,000

★★★

In Luxembourg:
Luxembourg .....1 **Northern Ireland** ..3
Scorers: Luxembourg - Manuel Cardoni 41
Northern Ireland - David Healy 21, 48, James Quinn 87
Halftime: 1-1; Attendance: 1,818

★★★

In Budapest:
Hungary .....0 **Australia** 3
Scorers: Stephen Laybutt 12, Josip Skoko 74, Craig Moore 90
Halftime 0-1; Attendance: 14,000

★★★

In Zagreb:
Croatia .....0 **Spain** 0
Attendance: 10,000

★★★

In Dublin:
Ireland .....3 **Czech Republic** ..2
Scorers: Ireland - Karel Rada 16og, Ian Harte 43, Robbie Keane 87
Czech Republic - Jan Koller 4, 35
Halftime 2-2; Attendance: 30,543

★★★

In Amsterdam:
Netherlands .....2 **Germany** 1
Scorers: Netherlands - Patrick Kluivert 15, Boudewijn Zenden 28
Germany - Christian Ziege 22
Halftime: 2-1, Attendance: 50,000

★★★

In London:
England .....0 **Argentina** 0
Attendance: 74,008

★★★

In Palermo:
Italy .....1 **Sweden** 0
Scorer: Alessandro Del Piero 80pen
Halftime: 0-0; Attendance: 17,249

★★★

In Charleroi:
Belgium .....1 **Portugal** 1
Scorers: Belgium - Branko Strupar 56
Portugal - Ricardo Sa Pinto 80
Halftime: 0-0; Attendance: 24,000

★★★

In Paris:
France .....1 **Poland** 0
Scorer: Zinedine Zidane 88
Halftime: 0-0; Attendance: 74,350

★★★

Four Nations tournament (in Muscat)
Oman .....0 **Slovenia** 4
Scorers: Miran Pavlin 15, Zlatko Zahovic 32, Zahovic 57, Milenko Acimovic 65pen
Red card: Spasoje Bulajic (Slovenia) 60
Halftime: 0-2; Attendance: 150

★★★

UAE .....1 **Switzerland** 0
Scorer: Ali Aloo Haider 85
Red cards:
Hans-Peter Zaugg (Switzerland, coach) 2
Stephane Henchoz (Switzerland) 42
Mohamed Ibrahim (UAE) 68
Halftime: 0-0; Attendance: 200

★★★

THE BETTING

ENGLISH PREMIER LEAGUE

Manchester United	$1.22
Leeds	$7.00
Liverpool	$9.00
Arsenal	$15.00
Chelsea	$34.00

EURO 2000

Holland	$5.00
Italy	$6.50
Spain	$7.00
France	$8.00
Germany	$9.00
England	$13.00
Czech Republic	$17.00
Sweden	$17.00
Yugoslavia	$26.00
Norway	$26.00
Portugal	$26.00
Romania	$26.00
Belgium	$26.00
Denmark	$51.00
Turkey	$67.00
Slovenia	$126.00

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

Barcelona	$3.50
Lazio	$4.00
Man United	$5.50
Chelsea	$8.00
Real Madrid	$10.00
Bayern Munich	$12.00
Fiorentina	$15.00
Valencia	$21.00
Porto	$26.00
Bordeaux	$81.00
Rosenborg	$81.00
Feyenoord	$101.00
Hertha	$101.00
Marseille	$151.00
Dynamo Kiev	$151.00
Sparta Prague	$501.00

UEFA CUP

Juventus	$5.00
Parma	$7.50
Arsenal	$8.00
Roma	$8.00
Leeds	$12.00
Dep La Coruna	$15.00
Borussia Dortmund	$15.00
Monaco	$17.00
Celta Vigo	$17.00
Atletico Madrid	$21.00
Real Mallorca	$21.00
Galatasaray	$26.00
Udinese	$26.00
Werder Bremen	$34.00
Lens	$41.00
Slavia Prague	$51.00

FA CUP 2000

Aston Villa	$2.70
Chelsea	$2.90
Newcastle	$3.60
Bolton	$9.00

WORLD

WORLD'S MOST CAPPED PLAYER

Lothar Matthaus

Lothar Matthaus became the world's most capped footballer by playing his 144th international against the Netherlands last week — 20 years after starting his international career against the same opponents.

By appearing in the friendly in Amsterdam he overtook former Swedish goalkeeper Thomas Ravelli's total of 143 games — a mark he shared with the Swede for the last few months.

Matthaus was only 19 when he first wore the West Germany shirt, in a group match at the 1980 European championships in Italy.

His side were leading the Dutch 3-0 when he came on for Bernard Dietz in the 73rd minute.

The teenager who was to mature into the greatest German player since Franz Beckenbauer did not impress on that particular day and was responsible for conceding a penalty.

Still, Germany won the match 3-2 and went on to win the tournament.

Bayern Munich: Tailored to Matthaus.

Although the Germans and the Dutch are not exactly the best of friends in the football world, Matthaus' childhood hero was a Dutchman who played against West Germany in the 1974 World Cup final.

"Johann Cruyff was the best player of the 1974 World Cup," Matthaus' who was 13 then, recalls.

"He was so elegant, so inspired in midfield and so dangerous in front of goal."

Matthaus has played against the Netherlands eight times — and only been on the losing side twice, once at the 1988 European championships in Hamburg and last week's match the most recent loss. Both losses were 2-1.

WHISTLES AND BOOS

Matthaus was there too when Frank Rijkaard spat at Rudi Voeller in another memorable incident at the 1990 World Cup.

But that was not enough to spoil his exciting Italian adventure. Wearing the captain's armband, he led his men to a 2-1 win before savouring the finest 90 minutes of his prolific career with a 1-0 victory over Argentina in the Rome final.

"I would have rather celebrated my record in Germany, or even in Italy or Croatia, where the fans like me," Matthaus said prior to this most recent match.

"In the Netherlands, they don't like the Germans, and they don't like me. But it will be fun, even if I'm whistled and booed by 30,000 people. That's always good for motivation."

FROM PLAYMAKER TO LIBERO

Feeling homesick, he left Italy in 1992 and returned to the only German club tailored to his measurements — Bayern Munich.

Slower than in his prime but still a superb player, he soon took up a new role as a libero and Bayern kindly allowed him to keep the number 10 shirt.

Marshalling a defence with authority was a straightforward task for a player of his calibre but he did have a problem — the re-unified Germany had a better man for the slot in Borussia Dortmund's Matthias Sammer, who had formerly played for East Germany.

Berti Vogts, then the head coach, knew that and he was also building his team around a man Matthaus could never get on with, that other German star of the past decade, Juergen Klinsmann.

So Matthaus had to sit on the sidelines for the best part of four seasons out of international soccer. He was not part of the side that, inspired by Sammer and Klinsmann, won the 1996 European championship in England.

The veteran of so many glorious battles was bitter and made sure everybody knew about it. But he concentratred on helping Bayern rule German soccer. It became so obvious that he remained a world class player that Vogts, missing the injured Sammer, took him to the 1998 World Cup finals.

Delighted to prove his worth, Matthaus was one of few players in a disappointing German squad to leave France with some credit and Vogts' successor, Erich Ribbeck, soon recalled him.

Ribbeck made it clear that he was counting on Matthaus for this year's Euro 2000.

It is easy to guess how Matthaus' dream scenario would read: another final against the Netherlands, another German victory.

He could then retire with his head held high, and full of stories about the Dutch.

Lothar Matthaus: German star.

FACTILE

1961: Born March 21 in Erlangen, Germany.
1979: Starts professional carreer with Borussia Moenchengladbach
1980: Makes international debut against the Netherlands
1984: Joins Bayern Munich
1988: Joins Inter Milan
1990: Captains Germany to victory at the World Cup in Italy Named European Footballer of the Year
1992: Returns to Bayern Munich
1998: Earns a recall in the Germany squad for the World Cup in France
2000: Feb 23: Becomes the world's most-capped player with his 144th international appearance — one more than former Sweden goalkeeper Thomas Ravelli — in a friendly against the Netherlands.

***

Club record:

Bayern Munich: Bundesliga champions: 1985, 1987, 1994, 1997, 1999 West German/German Cup winners 1986, 1998 UEFA Cup winners: 1996 European Cup finalists: 1987, 1999

***

Inter Milan: Italian champions: 1989 UEFA Cup winners: 1991

***

International record: European champion 1980 (did not play the final) World champion 1990 (captained the side)

Makes world record 144th international appearance on February 23 against the Netherlands

***

Other facts:

— Only field player to have appeared in five World Cup finals (1982, 1986, 1990, 1994, 1998)

— Will leave Bayern Munich in March to join U.S. Major League New York-New Jersey MetroStars

— Plans to retire from international soccer after this year's

Euro 2000 championship in Belgium and the Netherlands.

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IOC, FIFA and CLUBS

Three-way Showdown Looming

The International Olympic Committee (IOC), FIFA and Europe's leading clubs appear to be heading for a three-way showdown over the soccer competition at this year's Sydney Olympics.

IOC president Juan Antonio Samaranch has invited a FIFA delegation headed by president Sepp Blatter to a meeting in Lausanne on March 1 to discuss the contentious issue.

In recent years the IOC have, with some success, tried to increase the status of the competition. The current format is for under-23 teams but each country is also allowed three over-age players.

After nearly a century of little impact outside eastern Europe, Olympic soccer drew large crowds at the 1984 Games and by 1992 had begun to look something like a major competition.

The 1996 tournament, when Nigeria beat Argentina 3-2 in the final, was a huge success both in terms of crowds and worldwide TV attention.

Juan Antonio Samaranch: Olympic Soccer posing problems.

Samaranch, buoyed by its increasing status among soccer fans, said recently that he wanted to see an increase in over-age players, with five or even seven allowed.

Such a move would incense FIFA, who have always fought to prevent the Olympic tournament from growing into something that could threaten the World Cup as the sport's premier tournament.

Recently representatives of Europe's leading clubs voiced concern about releasing players for a 17-day Olympic tournament, plus preparation time, which takes place in September when most European leagues are in full swing.

UEFA general secretary Gerhard Aigner said last week: "The Olympics is a major issue. The clubs are extremely worried about the situation."

Clubs have also asked UEFA to put European club competitions on hold for the duration of the Olympics, a move which UEFA has rejected.

The March 1 meeting will also discuss the harmonisation of the international soccer calendar.

VILLA FAVOURITES FOR FA CUP

Aston Villa have been made narrow favourites to lift the FA Cup for the first time in 43 years after beating Premier League rivals Everton 2-1 in the quarter-finals last week.

Bookmakers William Hill rate Villa 13-8 to clinch the trophy with Chelsea, who beat Gillingham 5-0 at 7-4.

Villa will meet Bolton and Newcastle play Chelsea in the semi-finals.

Both ties will be staged at Wembley, on April 2 and April 9.

Newcastle, losing finalists for the last two seasons, are priced at 11-4 while the competition's remaining first division representatives, Bolton, are 9-1 outsiders.

KEEGAN HAPPY WITH STALEMATE

England and Argentina played out a goalless stalemate in a friendly at Wembley last week that started with great promise but petered out amid a flurry of substitutions.

On the positive side both teams produced attractive approach play, especially in a lively first half that hinted at more to come after the break. Unfortunately it didn't.

England, playing with far more purpose than when they lost 1-0 to Scotland in their last match at Wembley in November, enjoyed a long period of dominance.

Skipper Alan Shearer claimed he should have had a penalty as he went down attempting to reach an Emile Heskey cross after 21 minutes but they failed to take any of the few half-chances they created.

The closest they came to a goal was after 11 minutes when Shearer evaded his marker and headed narrowly wide from a David Beckham corner.

The second half produced little in the way of excitement at either end - although Leicester City's Heskey, starting an England match for the first time after four appearances as a substitute, showed plenty of pace and tenacity.

Although he did not create one opportunity of his own he caused Argentina's experienced captain Roberto Sensini so many problems he was substituted after 34 minutes.

A low, late drive by substitute Andy Cole was England's only shot on target — an improvement on the Scotland game when they didn't manage one.

Keegan said he was happy with his team's efforts. "I think the lads can be proud of their performance, we learned a lot of things tonight," he said. "The game was very useful for us.

"I thought (winger) Jason Wilcox was

Kevin Keegan: No goals, but pleased.

excellent, Dennis Wise was just superb tonight and Heskey — how often do you see a defender of the quality of Sensini taken off?"

Shearer said: "I think we went a long way tonight to getting the Scotland game out of our system which was very important. We restored a lot of pride again tonight."

On a night when English soccer mourned the death earlier in the day of Sir Stanley Matthews, both teams wore black armbands as a mark of respect. But what happened on the field will not remain long in the memory.

English coach Kevin Keegan, experimenting with his lineup ahead of Euro 2000, at least learned that midfielder Wise is capable of playing mature, controlled football at the highest level when he puts his mind to it.

Beckham, moved into the centre of midfield from his usual position wide on the right, failed to dominate the match and limped off injured 16 minutes from time.

At least the circumstances of him finishing this match were far less controversial than the way he ended the two sides' last encounter — sent off early in the second half of their classic World Cup match in 1998.

Argentina, starting their build-up for their qualifying campaign for the 2002 World Cup played well within themselves.

Although Juan Veron and Ariel Ortega saw plenty of the ball and created a number of openings, Gabriel Batistuta never looked like scoring and was replaced after 57 minutes.

TV GUIDE

 # All times are Australian Eastern Standard Summer Time

Tuesday February 29
English Premier League
Teams TBA (LIVE)
Fox Sports
6am – 9.30am

Futbol Mundial
SBS TV
4.00pm – 4.30pm

Wednesday March 1
English FA Cup (Replay)
Fox Sports
6am – 9am

UEFA Champions League
Lazio v Feyenoord (LIVE)
Optus Vision (ESPN)
6.30am-8.45am

UEFA Champions League
Real Madrid v Chelsea FC
Optus Vision (ESPN)
4.00pm-6.00pm

UEFA Champions League
Marseille v Chelsea FC
Optus Vision (ESPN)
6pm-8pm

European Soccer Show
Optus Vision (C7 Sport 12)
10.00pm-11.00pm

Thursday March 2
UEFA Champions League
Fiorentina v Valencia (LIVE)
Optus Vision (ESPN)
6.30am-8.45am

UEFA Champions League
FC Barcelona v FC Porto
Optus Vision (ESPN)
8.45am-11am

UEFA Champions League
Manchester Utd v FC Girondins
Optus Vision (ESPN)
4pm-6pm

Soccer Central
Optus Vision (C7 Sport 12)
9pm-10pm

UEFA Champions League
Barcelona v Porto
SBS TV
10pm – 12am

Spanish Primera Liga
Teams TBA
Fox Sports
11pm – 1am

Friday March 3
UEFA Cup Round 4
Teams TBA (LIVE)
Fox Sports
6am – 9am

Spanish Primera Liga
Teams TBA
Fox Sports 2
10am – 12pm

Argentine Football
BOCA Juniors v River Plate
Optus Vision (ESPN)
11am -1pm

National Soccer League
Northern Spirit v Wollongong (LIVE)
Optus Vision (C7 Sport 12)
7.30pm-9.30pm
Soccer Scene
Fox Sports
9pm – 10pm

Saturday March 4
English First Division
Stockport v Barnsley
Optus Vision (C7 Sport 13)
10am-12pm

Soccer Scene
Fox Sports
12pm – 1pm

Scottish Premier League
Teams TBA
Fox Sports
1pm – 3pm

UEFA Champions League highlights
SBS TV
3.30pm – 4.30pm

World Soccer
SBS TV
4.30pm – 5.30pm

English Premier League (REPEAT)
SBS TV
5.30pm – 6.30pm

UEFA Champions League
Dynamo Kyiv v Rosenborg BK
Optus Vision (ESPN)
6pm-8pm

English Premier League
Man Utd v Liverpool (LIVE)
Fox Sports
10pm – 1am

English Premier League
Teams TBA
Fox Sports
5am – 7am

Sunday March 5
Italian Serie A
Teams TBA (LIVE)
Optus Vision (ESPN)
6.25am-8.30am

Italian Soccer League
SBS TV
10.30am – 11.30am

On the Ball
SBS TV
11.30am – 12.30pm

English Premier League
Man Utd v Liverpool (Replay)
Plus second overnight game
Fox Sports
12pm – 3.30pm

UEFA Champions League
Hertha Berlin v AC Sparta
Optus Vision (ESPN)
3pm-5pm

National Soccer League
ABC TV
5pm-7pm

National Soccer League
Marconi v Newcastle (LIVE)
Optus Vision (C7 Sport 12)
6pm-8pm

English First Division
Sheff Utd v Queens Park Rangers
Optus Vision (C7 Sport 12)
12am-2am
(Monday Morning)

Dutch Football
SC Heerenveen v Feyenoord LIV
Optus Vision (ESPN)
3.55am-6am
(Monday Morning)

English Premier League
Leicester v Sunderland (LIVE)
Fox Sports
2am – 5am
(Monday Morning)

Monday March 6
English Premier League highlights
Fox Sports
5.30pm – 6.30pm

English Premier League highlights
SBS TV
7.30pm – 8.30pm

Italian Serie A
Teams TBA (LIVE)
Optus Vision (ESPN)
2am-4am
(Tuesday Morning)

ABSW

WORLD

Excludes Monday games

ENGLISH PREMIER LEAGUE

Arsenal 3 Southampton 1, Bradford City 1 Aston Villa 1, Chelsea 2 Watford 1, Coventry City 0 Tottenham Hotspur 1, Middlesbrough 0 Leeds United 0, Sheffield Wednesday 0 Newcastle United 2, Sunderland 1 Derby County 1, West Ham United 0 Everton 4, Wimbledon 2 Manchester United 2.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
1. Manchester Utd	**26**	**17**	**6**	**3**	**59**	**33**	**57**
2. Leeds United	26	16	3	7	39	29	51
3. Arsenal	26	14	5	7	46	27	47
4. Liverpool	25	14	5	6	38	21	47
5. Chelsea	26	13	7	6	37	24	46
6. Sunderland	26	11	7	8	42	37	40
7. Everton	26	10	9	7	46	35	39
8. Aston Villa	26	10	8	8	31	24	38
9. Tottenham Hotspur	26	11	5	10	35	29	38
10. Leicester City	25	10	5	10	35	36	35
11. West Ham United	25	9	8	8	34	35	35
12. Newcastle United	26	9	7	10	46	41	34
13. Coventry City	26	8	8	10	35	32	32
14. Middlesbrough	26	9	5	12	27	37	32
15. Wimbledon	26	6	11	9	37	45	29
16. Southampton	25	8	5	12	30	41	29
17. Derby County	26	6	7	13	28	39	25
18. Bradford City	26	6	7	13	26	42	25
19. Sheffield Wed	26	4	5	17	23	53	17
20. Watford	26	4	3	19	23	57	15

LEADING SCORERS:

22 - Kevin Phillips (Sunderland)

17 - Alan Shearer (Newcastle United), Andy Cole (Manchester United)

12 - Michael Bridges (Leeds United), Kevin Campbell (Everton), Paolo Di Canio (West Ham Utd)

11 - Dwight Yorke (Manchester United), Robbie Keane (Coventry City)

9 - Dion Dublin (Aston Villa), Steffen Iversen (Tottenham Hotspur), Tony Cottee (Leicester City), Tore Andre Flo (Chelsea), Niall Quinn (Sunderland)

8 - John Hartson (Wimbledon), Davor Suker (Arsenal), Thierry Henry (Arsenal), Marians Pahars (Southampton), Carl Cort (Wimbledon)

7 - Muzzy Izzet (Leicester City), Nwankwo Kanu (Arsenal), Brian Deane (Middlesbrough), Michael Owen (Liverpool), Tim Sherwood (Tottenham Hotspur), Gary McAllister (Coventry City), Marcus Gayle (Wimbledon), Titi Camara (Liverpool), Hamilton Ricard (Middlesbrough)

6 - Rory Delap (Derby County), Titi Camara (Liverpool), Francis Jeffers (Everton), Emile Heskey (Leicester City), Patrik Berger (Liverpool), Gilles de Bilde (Sheffield Wednesday), Gustavo Poyet (Chelsea), Harry Kewell (Leeds United), Duncan Ferguson (Everton), Trevor Sinclair (West Ham United), Frank Lampard (West Ham United), Fredrik Ljungberg (Arsenal), Dean Windass (Bradford City), Nicky Barmby (Everton), Chris Armstrong (Tottenham Hotspur).

ENGLISH DIVISION ONE

Birmingham 1 Ipswich 1, Barnsley 1 Bolton 1, Blackburn 2 West Bromwich 1, Charlton 1 Sheffield United 0, Grimsby 1 Crystal Palace 0, Manchester City 1 Walsall 1, Norwich 1 Huddersfield 1, Port Vale 1 Stockport 1, Swindon 0 Crewe 1, Wolverhampton 3 Nottingham Forest 0.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
1. Charlton	**32**	**22**	**5**	**5**	**59**	**29**	**71**
2. Ipswich	33	18	10	5	55	32	64
3. Manchester City	32	19	6	7	52	26	63
4. Barnsley	33	17	7	9	63	48	58
5. Birmingham	33	15	9	9	50	37	54
6. Huddersfield	33	15	8	10	50	36	53
7. Wolverhampton	33	14	10	9	47	36	52
8. Fulham	32	12	12	8	29	26	48
9. Blackburn	32	12	11	9	39	35	47
10. Bolton	32	12	10	10	44	35	46
11. Stockport	33	11	11	11	37	44	44
12. Queens Park	32	10	13	9	41	38	43
13. Norwich	32	11	10	11	33	35	43
14. Grimsby	33	12	7	14	37	52	43
15. Sheffield United	33	11	9	13	46	47	42
16. Tranmere	31	10	7	14	40	47	37
17. Crystal Palace	33	9	10	14	44	53	37
18. Nottingham Forest	33	9	9	15	35	43	36
19. West Bromwich	33	6	15	12	27	42	33
20. Crewe	33	8	8	17	32	44	32
21. Walsall	33	7	10	16	34	52	31
22. Portsmouth	32	7	9	16	35	49	30
23. Port Vale	31	6	11	14	33	42	29
24. Swindon	33	3	11	19	22	56	20

NATIONWIDE LEAGUE DIV TWO

Bournemouth 2 Blackpool 0, Bristol City 2 Scunthorpe 1, Cambridge 0 Millwall 2, Chesterfield 2 Reading 0, Colchester 1 Burnley 2, Luton 1 Brentford 2, Notts County 2 Cardiff 1, Oldham 1 Bristol 4, Rovers Oxford 1 Wrexham 4, Preston 0 Gillingham 2, Wigan 1 Stoke 2, Wycombe 3 Bury 0.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	PTS
1. Bristol Rovers	**32**	**20**	**6**	**6**	**55**	**26**	**66**
2. Preston	31	18	9	4	54	28	63
3. Millwall	33	17	9	7	49	34	60
4. Wigan	31	15	13	3	50	26	58
5. Burnley	31	16	10	5	43	25	58
6. Stoke	33	15	9	9	44	33	54
7. Notts County	33	15	8	10	49	37	53
8. Gillingham	29	15	7	7	52	34	52
9. Brentford	33	13	9	11	42	42	48
10. Bristol City	33	10	16	7	40	35	46
11. Wycombe	32	11	10	11	41	38	43
12. Luton	33	12	7	14	45	49	43
13. Bournemouth	33	12	6	15	45	49	42
14. Oldham	32	11	7	14	36	40	40
15. Colchester	33	11	7	15	42	60	40
16. Bury	31	9	12	10	43	42	39
17. Wrexham	32	8	10	14	34	49	34
18. Reading	32	7	12	13	39	52	33
19. Scunthorpe	32	7	10	15	31	50	31
20. Oxford	32	8	7	17	28	51	31
21. Cardiff	32	5	13	14	29	43	28
22. Blackpool	33	6	10	17	34	54	28
23. Cambridge	32	6	9	17	38	49	27
24. Chesterfield	32	5	10	17	20	37	25

NATIONWIDE LEAGUE DIV THREE

Carlisle 1 Shrewsbury 1, Cheltenham 2 Peterborough 1, Chester 1 Brighton 7, Halifax 0 Southend 0, Macclesfield 1 Lincoln 1, Mansfield 1 Darlington 2, Northampton 1 Barnet 0, Plymouth 1 Hartlepool 1, Rochdale 0 Rotherham 1, Swansea 0 Hull City 0, Torquay 0 Leyton 0, Orient York 0 Exeter 0.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	PTS
1. Rotherham	**33**	**20**	**6**	**7**	**55**	**23**	**66**
2. Swansea	32	18	7	7	35	21	61
3. Darlington	32	17	9	6	47	24	60
4. Barnet	33	16	8	9	45	37	56
5. Northampton	32	16	7	9	41	28	55
6. Peterborough	32	16	6	10	45	40	54
7. Rochdale	32	14	8	10	35	28	50
8. Hartlepool	33	15	5	13	43	38	50
9. Macclesfield	33	14	7	12	48	43	49
10. Torquay	32	13	9	10	44	35	48
11. Plymouth	32	12	12	8	40	35	48
12. Halifax	33	13	8	12	34	37	47
13. Cheltenham	32	13	7	12	33	31	46
14. Mansfield	33	13	6	14	41	43	45
15. Lincoln	32	11	10	11	50	50	43
16. Hull City	33	10	11	12	31	30	41
17. Southend	33	11	8	14	43	49	41
18. Brighton	33	10	10	13	47	39	40
19. Leyton Orient	33	10	8	15	33	38	38
20. Exeter	33	8	8	17	34	54	32
21. York	33	7	10	16	29	46	31
22. Shrewsbury	32	7	9	16	25	43	30
23. Carlisle	31	5	8	18	29	54	23
24. Chester	33	5	5	23	29	70	20

SCOTTISH PREMIER LEAGUE

Dundee 1 Rangers 7, Aberdeen 4 Hibernian 0, Hearts 0 Kilmarnock 0, St Johnstone 2 Dundee United 0

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
1. Rangers	**22**	**17**	**4**	**1**	**64**	**18**	**55**
2. Celtic	21	14	2	5	59	20	44
3. Motherwell	22	8	8	6	32	39	32
4. Dundee United	22	9	4	9	25	35	31
5. St Johnstone	23	7	7	9	24	27	28
6. Hearts	21	7	6	8	31	30	27
7. Hibernian	24	6	9	9	34	42	27
8. Dundee	23	7	2	14	26	43	23
9. Aberdeen	23	6	4	13	30	63	22
10. Kilmarnock	23	3	10	10	23	31	19

LEADING SCORERS:

20 - Mark Viduka (Celtic)

12 - Billy Dodds (Rangers, 9 for Dundee United)

10 - John Spencer (Motherwell), Nathan Lowndes (St Johnstone), Rod Wallace (Rangers)

9 - Michael Mols (Rangers), Jorg Albertz (Rangers), Gary McSwegan (Hearts)

8 - Willie Falconer (Dundee), Kenny Miller (Hibernian)

7 - Henrik Larsson (Celtic), Russell Latapy (Hibernian), Eyal Berkovic (Celtic), Christophe Cocard (Kilmarnock)

6 - Jonatan Johannson (Rangers), Lee McCulloch (Motherwell), Lubomir Moravcik (Celtic), Colin Cameron (Hearts), Arild Stavrum (Aberdeen)

5 - Dirk Lehmann (Hibernian), Mixu Paatelainen (Hibernian)

SCOTTISH FIRST DIVISION

Airdrie 1 Dunfermline 2, Ayr v Livingston G (postponed), Morton 1 Clydebank 0, Inverness CT 0 Falkirk 3, Raith 1 St Mirren 2.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	PTS
1. St Mirren	**26**	**16**	**6**	**4**	**56**	**30**	**54**
2. Dunfermline	27	14	10	3	48	26	52
3. Falkirk	27	15	5	7	48	33	50
4. Livingston	23	12	6	5	42	28	42
5. Raith	25	12	6	7	43	31	42
6. Inverness CT	26	8	8	10	40	41	32
7. Ayr	25	8	5	12	29	35	29
8. G Morton	26	7	6	13	38	46	27
9. Airdrie	26	5	6	15	19	51	21
10. Clydebank	25	0	4	21	14	56	4

SCOTTISH SECOND DIVISION

Alloa 1 Partick 1, Arbroath 1 Clyde 1, Hamilton 1 Queen of South 1, Stenhousemuir 1 Stirling 2, Stranraer 0 Ross County 2

	P	W	D	L	F	A	PTS
1. Clyde	**23**	**12**	**7**	**4**	**36**	**20**	**43**
2. Ross County	23	10	5	8	27	24	35
3. Stirling	25	10	4	11	47	45	34
4. Partick	24	9	7	8	29	28	34
5. Alloa	20	7	11	2	25	20	32
6. Arbroath	24	7	11	6	35	35	32
7. Stranraer	24	6	12	6	30	27	30
8. Hamilton	24	6	9	9	26	31	27
9. Stenhousemuir	23	7	5	11	30	34	26
10. Queen of South	24	5	5	14	31	52	20

SCOTTISH THIRD DIVISION

Berwick 2 Albion 1, Brechin 0 Queens Park 0, Cowdenbeath 4 Forfar 1, Dumbarton 3 Montrose 2, East Stirling 1 East Fife 0.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	PTS
1. Queens Park	**26**	**12**	**9**	**5**	**38**	**29**	**45**
2. Cowdenbeath	26	12	6	8	44	27	42
3. Berwick	23	11	7	5	34	19	40
5. Dumbarton	24	11	4	9	41	39	37
6. East Fife	24	11	4	9	28	28	37
7. East Stirling	24	8	5	11	18	28	29
8. Montrose	25	7	5	13	27	39	26
9. Brechin	24	6	5	13	28	38	23
10. Albion	24	4	5	15	24	51	17

ITALIAN SERIE A

Bari 1 Torino 1, Bologna 0 Piacenza 0, Cagliari 0 AC Milan 0, Inter Milan 3 Venezia 0, Juventus 2 AS Roma 1, Perugia 0 Verona 0, Reggina 2 Lecce 1, Lazio 2 Udinese 1, Parma 0 Fiorentina 4.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
1. Juventus	**23**	**14**	**8**	**1**	**33**	**11**	**50**
2. Lazio	23	13	7	3	43	22	46
3. AC Milan	23	12	9	2	48	28	45
4. Inter Milan	23	13	4	6	44	20	43
5. AS Roma	23	12	6	5	49	25	42
6. Parma	23	9	7	7	34	30	34
7. Udinese	23	9	6	8	39	32	33
8. Fiorentina	23	7	9	7	26	28	30
9. Bologna	23	7	7	9	19	23	28
10. Bari	23	7	7	9	27	35	28
11. Lecce	23	7	7	9	23	32	28
12. Perugia	23	7	5	11	22	40	26
13. Reggina	23	5	10	8	22	30	25
14. Torino	23	5	9	9	23	31	24
15. Verona	23	5	7	11	22	35	22
16. Venezia	23	5	4	14	20	42	19
17. Cagliari	23	2	11	10	20	34	17
18.Piacenza	23	3	7	13	12	28	16

LEADING SCORERS:

16 - Andriy Shevchenko (AC Milan)

15 - Vincenzo Montella (AS Roma)

14 - Hernan Crespo (Parma)

13 - Christian Vieri (Inter Milan), Filippo Inzaghi (Juventus), Cristiano Lucarelli (Lecce)

12 - Gabriel Batistuta (Fiorentina)

11 - Marcelo Salas (Lazio), Oliver Bierhoff (Milan), Marco Ferrante (Torino)

10 - Marco Delvecchio (Roma), Roberto Muzzi (Udinese)

9 - Mohamed Kallon (Reggina)

8 - Giuseppe Signori (Bologna)

7 - Francesco Totti (Roma), Filippo Maniero (Venezia)

6 - Patrick Mboma (Cagliari), Alvaro Recoba (Inter), Zvonimir Boban (Milan), Renato Olive (Perugia), Martin Joergensen (Udinese)

SPANISH PRIMERA LIGA

Alaves 2 Atletico Madrid 0, Athletic Bilbao 2 Malaga 2, Deportivo Coruna 2 Real Mallorca 1, Espanyol 5 Rayo Vallecano 1, Racing Santander 0 Real Sociedad 0, Real Betis 1 Sevilla 1, Real Zaragoza 2 Celta Vigo 1, Valladolid 2 Real Oviedo 1, Numancia 1 Valencia 2, Real Madrid 3 Barcelona 0.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
1. Deportivo Coruna	**26**	**15**	**4**	**7**	**46**	**32**	**49**
2. Real Zaragoza	26	11	10	5	44	28	43
3. Real Madrid	26	11	10	5	44	38	43
4. Alaves	26	12	6	8	31	27	42
5. Barcelona	26	12	5	9	48	34	41
6. Valencia	26	10	8	8	35	27	38
7. Celta Vigo	26	12	2	12	36	33	38
8. Athletic Bilbao	26	9	10	7	37	39	37
9. Real Mallorca	26	10	6	10	34	34	36
10. Rayo Vallecano	26	10	4	12	35	40	34
11. Numancia	26	9	7	10	35	41	34
12. Racing Santander	26	8	9	9	39	36	33
13. Malaga	26	8	9	9	38	36	33
14. Espanyol	26	8	8	10	40	38	32
15. Valladolid	26	8	8	10	24	31	32
16. Real Betis	26	9	5	12	25	40	32
17. Atletico Madrid	26	8	6	12	38	42	30
18. Real Sociedad	26	6	11	9	28	34	29
19. Real Oviedo	26	7	7	12	26	41	28
20. Sevilla	26	4	11	11	29	41	23

LEADING SCORERS:

21 - Salva Ballesta (Racing Santander), Jimmy Floyd Hasselbaink (Atletico Madrid)

19 - Savo Milosevic (Real Zaragoza)

16 - Catanha (Malaga)

14 - Diego Tristan (Real Mallorca)

13 - Roy Makaay (Deportivo Coruna)

12 - Raul Gonzalez (Real Madrid)

11 - Victor Fernandez (Valladolid), Rivaldo

WORLD

Excludes Monday games

(Barcelona)
10 - Gaizka Mendieta (Valencia), Fernando Morientes (Real Madrid)
9 - Juan Carlos Gomez (Sevilla), Vassilis Tsartas (Sevilla), Djalminha (Deportivo Coruna)
8 - Ruben Navarro (Numancia), Dani Garcia (Barcelona), Pauleta Resendes (Deportivo Coruna), Dely Valdes (Real Oviedo), Joseba Etxeberria (Athletic Bilbao), Patrick Kluivert (Barcelona)
7 - Miguel Angel Benitez (Espanyol), Luis Figo (Barcelona), Rodrigo Fabri (Valladolid), Juanele Castano (Real Zaragoza), Alfonso Perez (Real Betis), Pacheta Rojo (Numancia), Manuel Canabal (Rayo Vallecano), Raul Tamudo (Espanyol)
6 - Valery Karpin (Celta Vigo), Finidi George (Real Betis), Bolo Perez (Rayo Vallecano), Mario Turdo (Celta Vigo), Julio Salinas (Alaves), Jordi Ferron, (Rayo Vallecano), Turu Flores (Deportivo Coruna), Alexander Mostovoi (Celta Vigo), Oscar de Paula (Real Sociedad)

GERMAN FIRST DIVISION

SpVgg Unterhaching 3 Schalke 04 1, Borussia Dortmund 1 TSV 1860 Munich 1, Werder Bremen 2 VfL Wolfsburg 2, Hamburg SV 2 Kaiserslautern 1, Bayer Leverkusen 3 Hertha Berlin 1, MSV Duisburg 1 VfB Stuttgart 3, Bayern Munich 4 Eintracht Frankfurt 1, Hansa Rostock 1 SC Freiburg 1.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
1. Bayern Munich	**22**	**15**	**4**	**3**	**47**	**16**	**49**
2. Bayer Leverkusen	22	12	8	2	38	24	44
3. Hamburg SV	22	11	8	3	48	24	41
4. Werder Bremen	22	9	6	7	46	35	33
5. TSV 1860 Munich	22	9	6	7	34	31	33
6. Kaiserslautern	22	10	3	9	31	38	33
7. VfL Wolfsburg	22	8	8	6	30	34	32
8. Borussia Dortmund	22	7	10	5	27	18	31
9. Hertha Berlin	22	8	7	7	29	36	31
10. VfB Stuttgart	22	9	3	10	26	28	30
11. SpVgg Unter.g	22	8	5	9	24	25	29
12. Schalke 04	22	6	10	6	29	29	28
13. SC Freiburg	22	6	7	9	29	30	25
14. SSV Ulm	21	6	6	9	24	29	24
15. Hansa Rostock	22	5	9	8	28	41	24
16. Eintracht Frankfurt	22	6	2	14	26	35	20
17. MSV Duisburg	22	3	7	12	24	43	16
18. Arminia Bielefeld	21	2	5	14	15	39	11

LEADING SCORERS:
10 - Ebbe Sand (Schalke 04)
9 - Ailton (Werder Bremen), Hans-Joerg Butt, Tony Yeboah (both Hamburg SV), Elber, Paulo Sergio (both Bayern Munich), Ulf Kirsten (Bayer Leverkusen), Martin Max (TSV 1860 Munich), Michael Preetz (Hertha Berlin), Adel Sellimi (SC Freiburg)
8 - Stefan Beinlich, (Bayer Leverkusen), Marco Bode, Claudio Pizarro (both Werder Bremen), Youri Djorkaeff (Kaiserslautern)

DUTCH FIRST DIVISION

Twente Enschede 2 Heerenveen 0, RKC Waalwijk 1 Vitesse Arnhem 1, Utrecht 3 AZ Alkmaar 3, Sparta Rotterdam 1 NEC Nijmegen 0, Fortuna Sittard 2 Willem II Tilburg 0, Feyenoord 3 MVV Maastricht 0, Roda JC Kerkrade 1 PSV Eindhoven 2.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
1. PSV Eindhoven	**24**	**18**	**2**	**4**	**73**	**20**	**56**
2. Ajax Amsterdam	22	14	4	4	56	32	46
3. Feyenoord	23	13	7	3	46	26	46
4. Twente Enschede	23	12	9	2	40	21	45
5. Heerenveen	23	13	3	7	41	27	42
6. AZ Alkmaar	24	13	3	8	50	39	42
7. Vitesse Arnhem	24	11	8	5	46	36	41
8. Willem II Tilburg	23	11	4	8	37	41	37
9. Roda JC Kerkrade	22	10	4	8	36	31	34
10. RKC Waalwijk	23	10	3	10	33	43	33
11. Utrecht	23	9	3	11	39	44	30
12. Sparta Rotterdam	23	8	3	12	32	46	27
13. Graafschap Doet.	23	4	8	11	27	38	20
14. Fortuna Sittard	23	4	7	12	29	38	19
15. NEC Nijmegen	23	5	4	14	28	45	19
16. MVV Maastricht	23	4	5	14	29	50	17
17. Den Bosch	23	2	6	15	22	28	12
18. Cambuur	22	2	5	15	17	46	11

LEADING SCORERS:
29 - Ruud van Nistelrooy (PSV Eindhoven)
21 - Pierre van Hooijdonk (Vitesse Arnhem)
13 - John Bosman (AZ Alkmaar) Jan Vennegoor of Hesselink (Twente Enschede)
12 - Richard Knopper (Ajax Amsterdam) Nikos Machlas (Ajax) Bob Peeters (Roda JC Kerkrade) Luc Nilis (PSV)
11 - Mariano Bombarda (Willem II Tilburg)

FRENCH FIRST DIVISION

Racing Strasbourg 3 Monaco 2, Girondins Bordeaux 3 Nantes 0, Montpellier 1 Racing Lens 1, Bastia 2 AJ Auxerre 0, Stade Rennes 2 Le Havre 1, Paris St Germain 1 Nancy 1, Troyes 0 St-Etienne 1, Metz 1 Sedan 1, Olympique Lyon 2 Olympique Marseille 0.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
1. Monaco	**27**	**17**	**4**	**6**	**54**	**25**	**55**
2. Olympique Lyon	27	13	6	8	35	34	45
3. Paris St Germain	27	12	7	8	39	33	43
4. Sedan	27	12	6	9	37	35	42
5. AJ Auxerre	27	12	6	9	30	28	42
6. Girondins	27	10	8	9	40	35	38
7. Bastia	27	9	10	8	34	30	37
8. Stade Rennes	27	10	7	10	36	35	37
9. Racing Lens	27	10	7	10	31	29	37
10. Metz	27	7	15	5	32	26	36
11. St Etienne	27	10	6	11	38	42	36
12. Racing Strasbourg	27	10	6	11	33	41	36
13. Olympique	27	8	11	8	34	32	35
14. Nantes	27	9	5	13	32	34	32
15. Nancy	27	8	7	12	31	35	31
16. Le Havre	27	8	7	12	26	39	31
17. Troyes	27	9	2	16	26	45	29
18. Montpellier	27	5	8	14	30	40	23

LEADING SCORERS:
18 - Sonny Anderson (Olympique Lyon), David Trezeguet (Monaco)
16 - Marco Simone (Monaco)
14 - Christian (Paris St Germain)
13 - Alex (St Etienne)
12 - Lilian Laslandes (Girondins Bordeaux)
11 - Stephane Guivarc'h (AJ Auxerre), Sylvain Wiltord (Girondins Bordeaux), Antoine Sibierski (Nantes), Shabani Nonda (Stade Rennes)
10 - Tony Cascarino (Nancy)

BELGIAN FIRST DIVISION

Club Bruges 0 Anderlecht 2.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
1. Anderlecht	**24**	**17**	**6**	**1**	**64**	**23**	**57**
2. Standard Liege	24	15	2	7	55	36	47
3. Ghent	24	14	1	9	58	44	43
4. Club Bruges	24	13	4	7	52	25	43
5. Genk	24	12	6	6	51	37	42
6. Lierse	24	12	5	7	48	31	41
7. Germinal Beerschot	23	12	5	6	42	33	41
8. Excelsior Mouscron	24	12	4	8	51	36	40
9. Westerlo	24	10	6	8	45	53	36
10. Mechelen	24	10	3	11	39	53	33
11. Eendracht Aalst	24	9	2	13	43	50	29
12. Lokeren	23	8	5	10	42	50	29
13. Harelbeke	24	8	4	12	48	48	28
14. Beveren	24	5	6	13	33	52	21
15. Charleroi	24	5	6	13	28	48	21
16. Sint-Truiden	24	5	4	15	24	52	19
17. Verbroedering	24	3	9	12	19	43	18
18. Lommel	24	1	10	13	22	50	13

PORTUGUESE PREMIER LEAGUE

Rio Ave 1 Campomaiorense 0, Alverca 2 Vit. Guimaraes 1, Gil Vicente 5 Maritimo 1, Farense 3 Salgueiros 2, Vitoria Setubal 1 Santa Clara 0, Estrela Amadora 3 Benfica 0, FC Porto 2 Belenenses 1, Sporting Braga 0 Uniao Leiria 2.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
1. Porto	**23**	**15**	**6**	**2**	**46**	**13**	**51**
2. Sporting Lisbon	22	14	6	2	38	18	48
3. Benfica	22	14	5	4	35	19	47
4. Vitoria Guimaraes	22	11	4	7	34	24	37
5. Boavista	22	10	4	7	22	17	34
6. Maritimo	23	9	7	7	26	23	34
7. Gil Vicente	23	9	7	7	31	24	34
8. Estrela Amadora	23	7	10	6	26	23	31
9. Belenenses	23	6	11	5	24	21	29
10. Averca	23	8	5	10	25	32	29
11. Braga	23	8	3	11	29	30	27
12. Uniao Leiria	23	6	8	9	23	25	26
13. Salgueiros	23	7	4	12	19	29	25
14. Rio Ave	23	6	7	10	25	33	25
15. Campomaiorense	23	6	5	12	19	32	23
16. Farense	23	5	8	10	21	45	23
17. Santa Clara	23	4	8	11	22	32	20
18. Vitoria Setubal	23	4	4	15	16	38	16

YUGOSLAV FIRST DIVISION

Red Star Belgrade 1 Zemun Belgrade 1, Borac Cacak 2 Buducnost Podgorica 1, Milicionar Belgrade 0 Rad Belgrade 3, Sartid Smederevo 1 OFK Beograd Belgrade 0, Mogren Budva 2 Radnicki Kragujevac 1, Obilic Belgrade 2 Spartak Subotica 0, Hajduk Kula 1 Radnicki Nis 0, Vojvodina Novi Sad 1 Sutjeska Niksic 1, Proleter Zrenjanin 0 Partizan Belgrade 2, Hajduk Belgrade 1 Cukaricki Belgrade 0.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
1. Obilic Belgrade	**24**	**19**	**4**	**1**	**46**	**16**	**61**
2. Partizan Belgrade	23	19	3	1	57	19	60
3. Red Star Belgrade	23	16	6	1	53	15	54
4. Rad Belgrade	24	10	6	8	38	30	36
5. Milicionar Belgrade	24	10	5	9	36	32	35
6. OFK Beograd	24	9	7	8	35	35	34
7. Buducnost	23	10	3	10	30	27	33
8. Radnicki	24	9	6	9	23	28	33
9. Sutjeska Niksic	24	9	6	9	32	37	33
10. Zeleznik	23	8	6	9	29	28	30
11. Vojvodina	24	9	3	12	33	33	30
12. Radnicki Nis	24	9	3	12	30	32	30
13. Zemun Belgrade	24	8	6	10	29	39	30
14. Hajduk Belgrade	24	9	2	13	38	44	29
15. Hajduk Kula	24	8	5	11	19	25	29
16. Proleter Zrenjanin	24	6	9	9	21	28	27
17. Cukaricki	22	7	5	10	21	27	26
18. Sartid Smederevo	24	7	5	12	22	29	26
19. Mogren Budva	24	7	4	13	23	43	25
20. Borac Cacak	24	5	3	16	30	53	18
21. Spartak Subotica	24	4	5	15	16	45	17

LEADING SCORERS:
14 - Bogic Popovic (Hajduk Belgrade), Sasa Ilic (Partizan Belgrade)
12 - Mateja Kezman (Partizan), Mihajlo Pjanovic (Red Star Belgrade)
11 - Milan Radojicic (Milicionar Belgrade)
10 - Branko Jelic (Red Star), Malesija Vojvoda (Radnicki Nis), Gabrijel Radojicic (Obilic Belgrade), Nemanja Dancetovic (Milicionar)

CROATIAN FIRST DIVISION

Dinamo 2 Zagreb 2, Hajduk 1 Slaven Belupo 0, Cibalia 0 Rijeka 0, Sibenik 0 Istra 1, Varteks 2 Vukovar 91 0, Hrv. Dragovoljac 3 Osijek 0.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
1. Hajduk	**18**	**14**	**3**	**1**	**45**	**15**	**45**
2. Dinamo	18	12	5	1	48	14	41
3. Osijek	18	9	3	6	30	28	30
4. Rijeka	18	8	4	6	34	22	28
5. Varteks	18	7	3	8	22	28	24
6. Cibalia	18	5	8	5	22	20	23
7. Zagreb	18	5	8	5	21	24	23
8. Slaven Belupo	18	4	8	6	16	22	20
9. Hrv. Dragovoljac	18	4	5	9	21	37	17
10. Vukovar 91	18	3	6	9	14	28	15
11. Sibenik	18	2	7	9	13	30	13
12. Istra	18	3	4	11	17	35	13

GREEK FIRST DIVISION

Panachaiki Patras 1 Xanthi 1, Ethnikos Astir Athens 1 PAOK Salonika 1, Proodeftiki Piraeus 0 OFI Heraklion 0, Paniliakos Pyrgos 1 Trikala 3, Apollon Athens 0 Ionikos Piraeus 2, Olympiakos Piraeus 5 Kavala 0, Panionios Athens 1 Aris Salonika 3, Iraklis Salonika 3 AEK Athens 1, Kalamata v Panathinaikos.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
1. Olympiakos	**21**	**19**	**0**	**2**	**60**	**14**	**57**
2. Panathinakos	20	17	2	1	52	14	53
3. OFI Heraklion	21	13	6	2	37	23	45
4. Iraklis Salonika	21	11	3	7	39	31	36
5. Aris Salonika	21	10	5	6	31	23	35
6. AEK Athens	21	10	4	7	37	27	34
7. PAOK Salonika	21	7	8	6	32	27	29
8. Xanthi	21	7	8	6	22	23	29
9. Paniliakos Pyrgos	21	8	4	9	28	25	28
10. Panionios Athens	21	9	1	11	31	42	28
11. Ionikos Piraeus	21	5	10	6	22	25	25
12. Ethinkos Astir	21	7	3	11	19	29	24
13. Kavala	21	5	4	12	21	39	19
14. Panachaiki Patras	21	4	7	10	20	30	19
15. Trikala	21	4	4	13	19	40	16
16. Kalamata	20	3	6	11	19	40	15
17. Proodeftiki Piraeus	21	3	6	12	13	31	15
18. Apollon Athens	21	3	5	13	14	32	14

HUNGARIAN FIRST DIVISION

Haladas-Szombathely 1 Kispest-Honved 2, MTK Budapest 1 Ujpest 0, Zalaegerszeg 0 Nagykanizsa 0, Pecs 1 Siofok 1, Nyirseg-Spartacus 2 Diosgyor 0, Dunaferr 3 Debrecen 2, Vac 1 Tatabanya 1.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
1. Dunaferr	**18**	**11**	**6**	**1**	**47**	**17**	**39**
2. MTK Budapest	18	10	6	2	31	14	36
3. Vasas Budapest	17	11	1	5	32	16	34
4. Debrecen	18	8	5	5	27	21	29
5. Pecs	18	7	8	3	24	23	29
6. Gyor ETO	18	7	6	5	31	18	27
7. Ujpest	17	7	6	4	31	21	27
8. Tatabanya	18	6	9	3	21	20	27
9. Ferencvaros	17	7	4	6	27	17	25
10. Zalaegerszeg	18	6	7	5	21	13	25
11. Nyirseg-Spartacus	18	5	5	8	17	30	20
12. Kispest-Honved	18	4	7	7	18	23	19
13. Haladas-	17	5	3	9	19	27	18
14. Diosgyor	18	4	6	8	17	29	18
15. Nagykanizsa	18	3	7	8	14	22	16
16. Siofok	18	5	3	10	14	28	15
17. Szeged	18	3	5	10	13	41	11
18. Vac	18	1	6	11	16	40	9

LEADING SCORERS:
15 - Attila Tokoli (Dunaferr)
11 - Peter Horvath (Ferencvaros)
8 - Danut Frunza (Diosgyor), Krisztian Kenesei (MTK Budapest), Mihaly Toth (Ujpest)
7 - Bela Illes (MTK Budapest), Thomas Sowunmi (Vasas Budapest), Gabor Zavadszky (Dunaferr)
6 - Istvan Farago (Szeged), Igor Nicsenko (Dunaferr), Attila Szili (Vasas Budapest).

AFRICAN QUALIFIERS

Group A: Nigeria 1 Uganda 0, Angola 4 Zimbabwe 2.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
1. Zimbabwe	4	3	0	1	10	7	9
2. Nigeria	4	3	0	1	7	4	9
3. Angola	4	2	0	2	9	8	6
4. Uganda	4	0	0	4	3	10	0

Group B: Cameroon 2 S. Africa 0, Guinea 1 Ghana 2.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
1. Cameroon	**4**	**3**	**0**	**1**	**7**	**3**	**9**
2. Ghana	4	2	1	1	7	5	7
3. South Africa	4	2	1	1	7	5	7
4. Guinea	4	0	0	4	2	10	0

Group C: Egypt 2 Iv. Coast 1, Morocco 2 Tunisia 0,

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
1. Morocco	**4**	**3**	**0**	**1**	**8**	**6**	**9**
2. Egypt	4	2	1	1	7	6	7
3. Ivory Coast	4	1	2	1	9	7	5
4. Tunisia	4	0	1	3	4	9	1

NATIONAL LEAGUE

	Total							Home						Away					
	P	W	D	L	F	A	PTS	P	W	D	L	F	A	P	W	D	L	F	A
SYDNEY OLYMPIC	23	13	5	5	46	25	44	11	6	4	1	29	13	12	7	1	4	17	12
NEWCASTLE BREAKERS	23	12	6	5	34	27	42	12	7	4	1	24	15	11	5	2	4	10	12
WOLLONGONG WOLVES	23	11	7	5	46	34	40	12	8	1	3	24	16	11	3	6	2	22	18
PERTH GLORY	22	11	7	4	41	29	40	11	7	3	1	26	14	11	4	4	3	15	15
MARCONI STALLIONS	22	11	5	6	32	26	38	10	6	1	3	14	11	12	5	4	3	18	15
CARLTON SC	22	9	6	7	36	28	33	12	5	4	3	18	12	10	4	2	4	18	16
BRISBANE STRIKERS	23	9	6	8	32	27	33	11	5	4	2	21	10	12	4	2	6	11	17
AUCKLAND KINGZ	21	8	5	8	36	36	29	10	4	3	3	18	17	11	4	2	5	18	19
SOUTH MELBOURNE	22	8	5	9	33	36	29	11	6	2	3	22	12	11	2	3	6	11	24
PARRAMATTA POWER	21	8	4	9	36	33	28	12	5	4	3	21	15	9	3	0	6	15	18
ADELAIDE CITY FORCE	23	7	7	9	29	27	28	12	5	4	3	21	14	11	2	3	6	8	13
NORTHERN SPIRIT	23	8	3	12	27	38	27	11	5	2	4	14	15	12	3	1	8	13	23
MELBOURNE KNIGHTS	23	7	6	10	27	39	27	11	5	2	4	13	10	12	2	4	6	14	29
GIPPSLAND FALCONS	23	6	6	11	15	28	24	11	3	2	6	8	12	12	3	4	5	7	16
CANBERRA COSMOS	23	5	6	12	29	44	21	11	3	3	5	13	13	12	2	3	7	16	31
SYDNEY UNITED	23	3	4	16	14	36	13	13	3	2	8	11	19	10	0	2	8	3	17

NEWCASTLE BREAKERS 2
(Roberts 45, Wieczorek 55)
GIPPSLAND FALCONS 0

Venue: Breakers Stadium. **Crowd:** 7,024. **Referee:** C Diomis.
Cautions: Durakovic (GF) 36; Savage (GF) 84; Wieczorek (NB) 90.
Teams: Newcastle Breakers: Catlin, Pryce, Roberts (Angievski 85), McManus, Sprod, Dodd, Buonavoglia, Owens (Trpcevski 77), Wieczorek, Harper, Smith (Tancheski 71).
Gippsland Falcons: Jevdjevic, D Fak, Durakovic, Marcina (Savage 56), Gotis, Bell (Nilo 75), Vargas (Robertson 64) Puca, Hutchinson, MacNicol, Mandic.

CARLTON SC 1
(Atkinson 41pen)
ADELAIDE CITY FORCE 2
(Mori 15, Vidmar 70)

Venue: Olympic Park. **Crowd:** 1,759. **Referee:** G Connolly.
Cautions: Day (ACF) 28, Kim (ACF) 21, Douglas (CSC) 69.
Teams: Carlton SC: Anastasiadis, McPherson, Douglas, Slater, Atkinson, Lapsansky, Thompson (Deans 89), Conroy, Terminello (Packer 81), Vasilevski, Horvat (Markovski 74).
Adelaide City Force: Knezevic, Tobin (Zelic 59), Mori, Veart, Sabljak, Vidmar, Day (Hassell 66), Kemp, Cartwright, Costanzo, Kim (Brain 46).

SYDNEY UNITED 1
(Bosevski 86)
MELBOURNE KNIGHTS 2
(Reda 52, Urlovic 85)

Venue: Sydney United SC. **Crowd:** 2,223. **Referee:** B. Hugo.
Cautions: Saric (SU) 90.
Red Card: Vargas (MK) 62.
Teams: Sydney United: Tolios, Bozinovski, J Moric (Rakic 55), Palapanis (Zek 69), Saric, Maric, Savoca, Arrarte, Pondeljak, Usljebrka, Jerman (Bosevski 22).
Melbourne Knights: John, Rajher (Nastevski 79), Kovacevic, Kelic, Magdic, Vargas, Kiratzoglou, Banini, Rados (Urlovic 57), Reda (Vukadin 61), Susa.

SYDNEY OLYMPIC 3
(Arambasic 15, Emerton 23, Cardozo 58)
NORTHERN SPIRIT 1
(Slater 37)

Venue: Belmore Sports Ground. **Crowd:** 7,232. **Referee:** S Micallef.
Cautions: Cardozo (SO) 40.
Teams: Sydney Olympic: Kourtis: Baillie, Juric, Zoricich: Emerton, Mendez (Zorbas 66), Thomas, Wilson: Cardozo, N. Carle (Tome 61), Arambasic (Jomaa 80).
Northern Spirit: Henderson: Casserly, Cunico, Bilokapic, Wearne: S. Cranney, Berti (T.Cranney 54), Griffiths, Langdon (Moss 71): Saad (Cantanzaro 35), Slater.

PARRAMATTA POWER 1
(Angelucci 33)
BRISBANE STRIKERS 1
(Battistin 57)

Venue: Parramatta Stadium **Crowd:** 2,383. **Referee:** M Shield.
Cautions: J Gibson (PP) 30, Meredith (BS) 53, Angelucci (PP) 88, Battistin (BS) 90.
Teams: Parramatta Power: M.Gibson: Barrett, Vrkic, Plesa (Townsend 78), Bymes, Bennett: J. Gibson (Griffiths 79), Berry, Burns: Sterjovski, Angelucci.
Brisbane Strikers: Bolton: Bell, Battistin, Gwynne, Meredith (Baldwin 82): Pilic, Ditton (Stefanutto 75), Srhoj: Grierson, McLaren, Dwyer.

SOUTH MELBOURNE 1
(Curcija 54)
MARCONI STALLIONS 2
(Care 26, Coveny 78og)

Venue: Bob Jane Stadium. **Crowd:** 6,128. **Referee:** E Lennie.
Cautions: Panopoulos (SM) 47, Orlic (SM) 61, Smith (MS) 57, Curcija (SM) 71.
Teams: South Melbourne: Jones, Isosifidis, Blatsis (Orlic 46), Clarkson, Panopoulos (Tsekinis 80), Coveny, Trimboli, Curcija, Lozanovski, Liparoti, Vlahos.
Marconi Stallions: Aceski, Farah, Longo, Babic, Gibson, McDonald (Care 17), Smith, Maloney (Invincible 84), Zoric, Duric (Karl 76), Trajanovski

WOLLONGONG WOLVES 3
(Young 45 & 56, Masi 49)
AUCKLAND KINGZ 1
(Ngata 38 pen)

Venue: Brandon Park. **Crowd:** 3,313. **Referee:** D Rugg.
Cautions: Nil.
Red Card: Osman (AK) 2.
Teams: Wollongong Wolves: Pogliacomi, Souris, Ceccoli, Stanton, Cervinski, Reid (Petrovski 71), Young, Chipperfield, Masi (Blake 79), O'Grady (Huxley 45), Mennillo.
Auckland Kingz: Stergiopoulos, Bunce, Van Steeden, Ngata, Osman, Vicelich, Perry, Batty, Jones, Jackson (Moya 83), Juri (Silva 70) (Rufer 83).

PERTH GLORY 3
(Edwards 2 & 28, Boutsianis 42)
CANBERRA COSMOS 2
(De Jesus 31 pen & 70 pen)

Venue: Perth Oval. **Crowd:** 13,158. **Referee:** M Breeze.
Cautions: Burt (CC) 28, Halpin (PG) 34, Arranz (CC) 38, Valle (PG) 53, James (CC) 58, Junior (PG) 60, Popovich (CC) 66, Clark (CC) 73.
Teams: Perth Glory: Petkovic, Afkos (Ergic 80), Miller, Naven, Valle, Thorp (Hamwell 40), Junior, Halpin, Edwards, Boutsianis (Schwertz 70), Wehrman.
Canberra Cosmos: Barlow, Popovich, Burt, Polak, Winnie, Arranz (Milin 72), James (Watkins 61), Hooker (Gonzalez 70), Clark, Roberts, De Jesus.

LEADING GOALSCORERS

P Cardozo	(Sydney Olympic)	14
M Curcija	(South Melbourne)	14
C Boutsianis	(Perth Glory)	13
P Foster	(Brisbane Strikers)	11
A Moreira	(Carlton SC)	11
J Buonavoglia	(Newcastle Breakers)	10
E Masi	(Wollongong Wolves)	10
D Mori	(Adelaide City Force)	10
S Young	(Wollongong Wolves)	10
A Edwards	(Perth Glory)	9
J Griffiths	(Parramatta Power)	9
A Marth	(Carlton SC)	9
S Petrovski	(Wollongong Wolves)	9

ABSW PLAYER OF THE YEAR
(PROGRESSIVE POINTS)
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DEFERRED GAMES

Wednesday March 1: Marconi Stallions v Parramatta Power Marconi Stadium 7.30pm, **Carlton SC v South Melbourne Olympic Park 7.30pm.**

ROUND TWENTY FOUR

Friday March 3: Adelaide City Force v Sydney United Hindmarsh Stadium 8pm, **Northern Spirit v Wollongong Wolves North Sydney Oval 7.30pm,** Auckland Kingz v Sydney Olympic North Harbour Stadium 7.30pm.
Saturday March 4: Brisbane Strikers v Perth Glory Suncorp Metway Stadium 7pm, Gippsland Falcons v Parramatta Power Falcons Park 7pm.
Sunday March 5: Marconi Stallions v Newcastle Breakers Marconi Stadium 6pm, Melbourne Knights v South Melbourne Knights Stadium 6pm.
Tuesday March 7: Canberra Cosmos v Carlton SC Bruce Stadium 7.30pm.

(All times provided are local times)